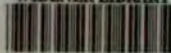


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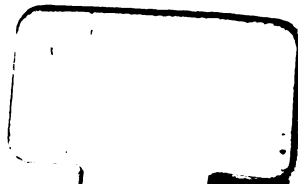
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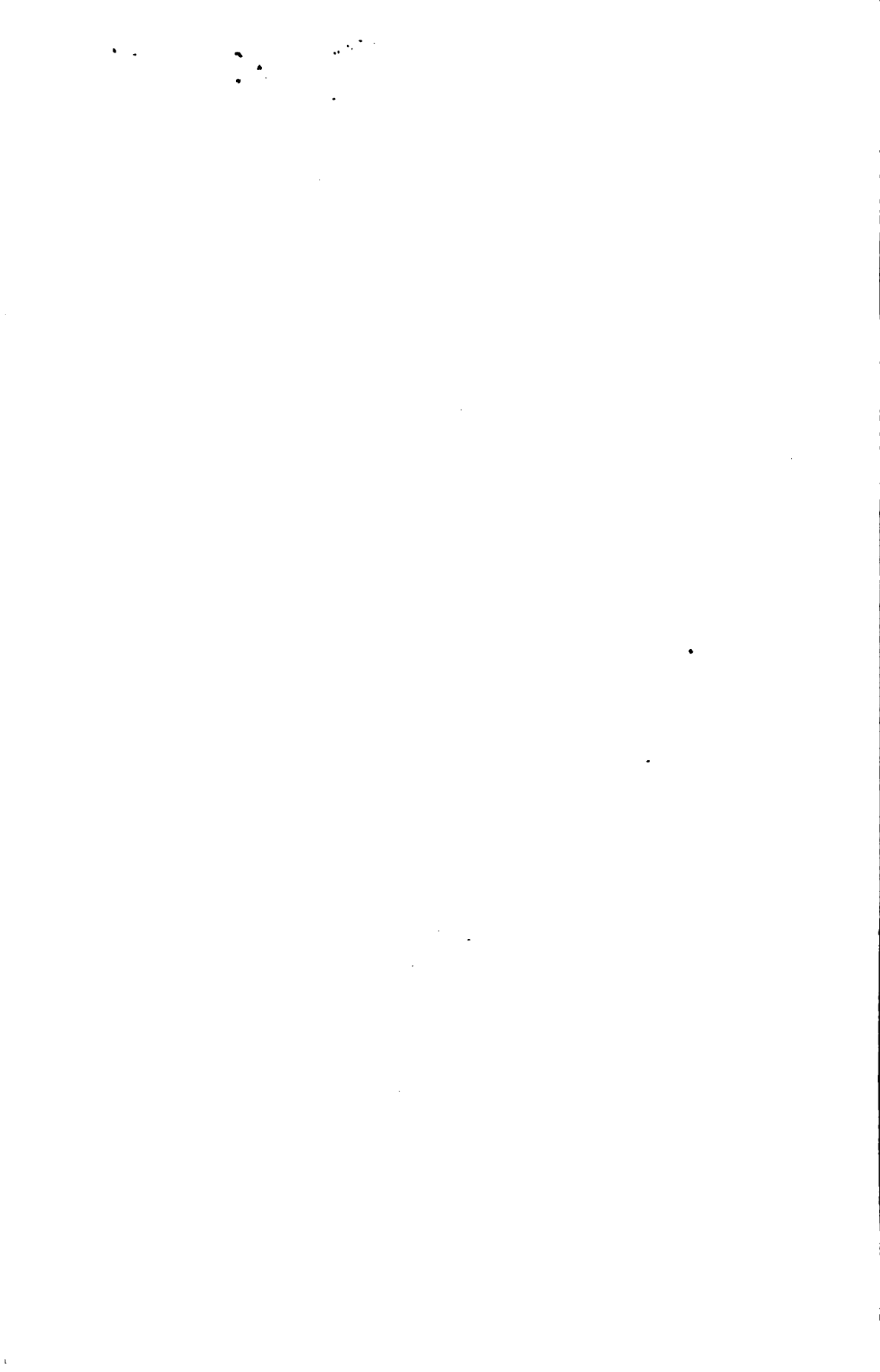
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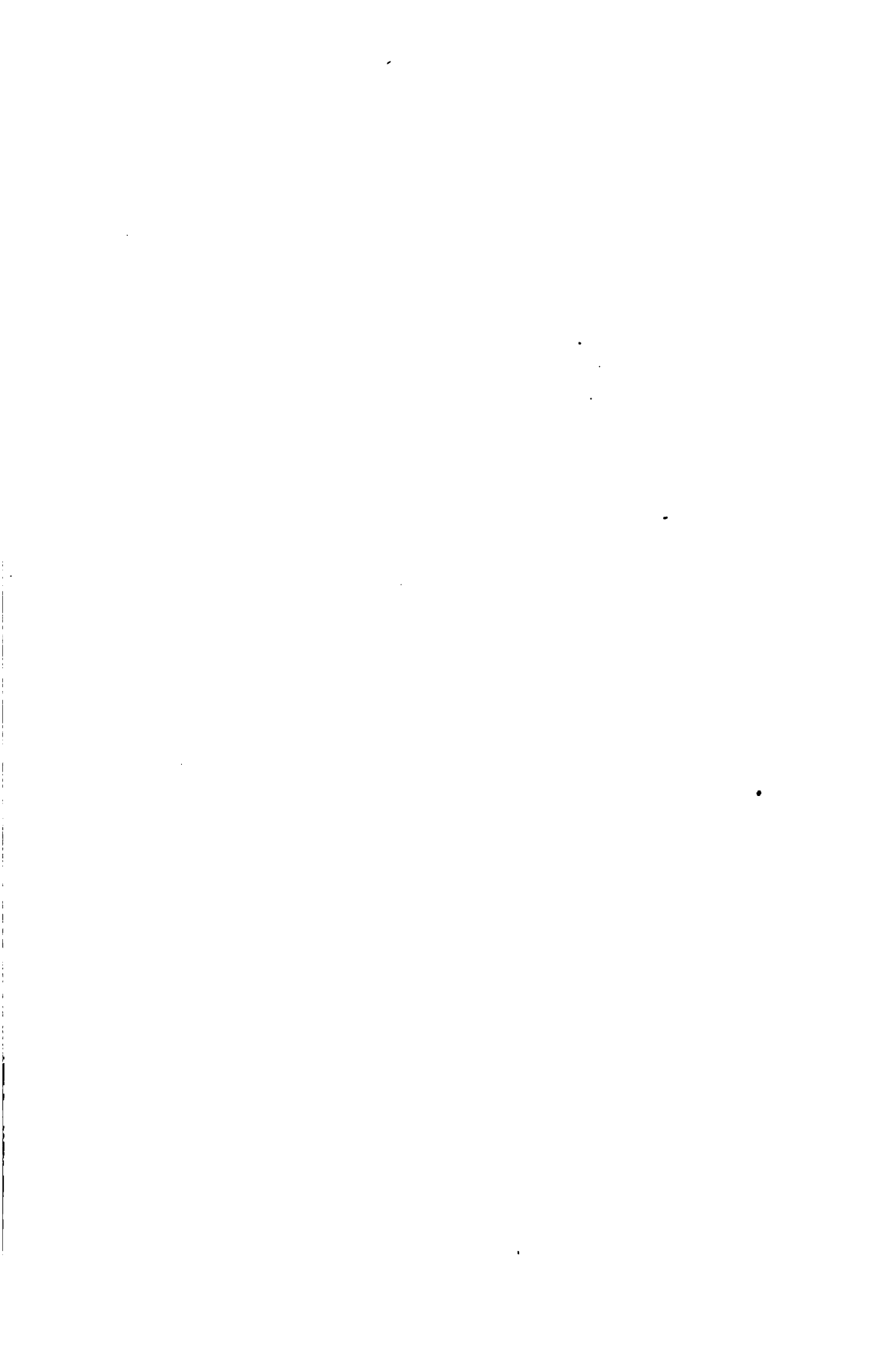
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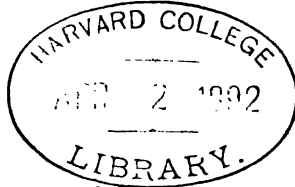
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JANUARY,
1891

VOL
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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR.

All the Year Round

a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

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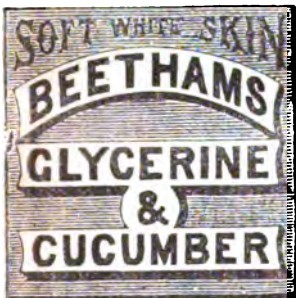
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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 105.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 1891. PRICE TWOPENCE.

"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

BY RITA.

Author of "Dame Durdan," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE STORY OF DOUGLAS HAY.

YOUTH is headstrong and impetuous. That is no new thing to say; we have all heard it often enough.

I suppose it was only natural that I, Douglas Hay, scapegrace and ne'er-do-well as I had always been called, should have consumed most of my hot-headed, youthful days in longings to be free and untrammelled—to escape the bondage of conventionality, and the burden of narrowmindedness, and the mixture of cant and shrewdness, psalm-singing, kirk-going, and money-getting, which, to my mind, represented my nation, or such of it as had come under my ken.

My mother I had never known; my father was a tyrant in disposition and a miser in habits; my home a dreary and unhappy one, against which I had instinctively rebelled, and which, to my youthful mind, had represented only a place of punishment, fault-finding, and hardships.

I must frankly confess that I never willingly spent an hour there which I could possibly spend anywhere else, and that my father was never sorry to see my back turned on his house.

If flogging, and semi-starvation, and sarcasm are good rules for bringing up a child, then assuredly I should have been a model of excellence, but as the character I bore

in my native place was that of a "born reprobate," I can only suppose that the treatment signally failed in what it was intended to do for me.

Pious elders of the Kirk shook their heads as they passed me by; worthy mothers of families tried the effects of a "word in season," but their idea of "season" invariably clashed with mine, and the seed never sprang up, or took any root worth speaking of.

I went to school, and, having a fair amount of ability, I managed to acquire as much knowledge as the generality of boys ever do. The masters always said I might have "done better"; but as a rule they are a race niggardly of praise and impossible to please. I made little attempt to win either praise or satisfaction from them, and they reported me to my father according to their judgement and opinion.

Needless to say it differed somewhat from my own.

When school-days were over, the question of my future career was mooted, and here again I and the author of my being were very widely opposed in our views. I wished to be a soldier—he would not hear of it, but was bent upon my entering the Church. This I resolutely refused to do, and while the battle waged I led a very idle and reprehensible life.

I was fond of gaiety and amusement; I desired, above all things, experience, and I set to work to gain it in whatever way seemed to me good. Women petted me and were fond of me. I had the talent or facility which makes a young man popular—that is to say, I was a fair musician, a good dancer, an excellent shot, and was possessed of indefatigable energy and spirits.

The women took me up, and the men

abused me; between them they afforded me plenty of amusement and occupation.

I was as seldom at home as I could help, and the gulf between my father and myself grew wider and wider as time went on, till I was too old to be tyrannised over, and too independent to be bullied.

An old aunt—whom I had never seen—died suddenly, and left me about fifty pounds a year. It was not much, but it made me independent of my father, and, though the miser's side of his nature rejoiced at the saving of expense, the tyrannical was displeas'd at the comparative freedom and independence I could now enjoy.

I went to Edinburgh and Glasgow, delighted with the new sense of liberty. I made plenty of friends and acquaintances, some, perhaps, less safe than others; but what cares youth for danger, risk, or reputability?

I went back to my native town after one of these visits to the capital, and there, for the first time, I met the fate that sooner or later overtakes all manhood. I did not at first understand what such a meeting might mean for me. I did not think it was in me to care seriously or deeply for any woman. For their own sakes, I am sorry to say, women had led me to consider them in a very light and depreciative manner. But somehow this small slip of girlhood, with her wistful little face, and big, dark, solemn eyes, touched some chord in my nature as yet unawakened or recognised even by myself.

She was so innocent, so young; there was something about her so altogether fragile and pathetic that she seemed to attract love and tenderness as naturally as a child. How easy it was to win her interest—to make that interest ripen into something warmer, deeper, more passionate! The baseness of rivalry was not wanting as an incentive, had I needed such. I could see her cousin Kenneth cared for her from the first; but he was a cold and cautious wooer, and it needed little effort on my part to push him out of the field. A more formidable rival, however, arose in the shape of the Laird of Corriemoor, one of the richest and best-known of Highland landowners, who had fallen, I plainly saw, an easy victim to the little winsome lass who was every one's pet and favourite.

Even as I write these words the sense of my own baseness and ingratitude

underlies them each and all. She loved me so truly, and so deeply; and I—well, Heaven knows I loved her too; but that did not prevent my behaving as only a scoundrel and a coward would have behaved.

Often I asked myself why? Even now it is somewhat of a mystery to me—now, when the wide seas roll between us, and she and I may, in all probability, touch hands in love or friendship never, never more!

In these long, lonely nights, pacing to and fro the deck of the ship that bears me further and further away, how often I have thought of her—with what a mingling of regret, and sorrow, and desire!

And yet, what could have come of our love but misfortune and unhappiness? Every one opposed it, and I could not blame them for doing so.

I had sown my reputation years before by many an ill deed, and careless word, and idle habit. What other harvest could I expect to reap than the one I had gathered in?

Some sudden fit of remorse and disgust with myself, and the influence brought to bear on me by another woman, resulted in an abrupt break between Athole Lindsay and myself.

I know that woman is unworthy to be named in the same breath with the girl I loved. She was a siren, made to snare men's fancies. Their conquest had long been to her an easy and everyday matter. I read her very clearly from the first, and the reading amused me, as did the pretty, subtle love-making, so thinly disguised under the friendly interest and attentions she bestowed on me.

Heaven knows I don't say this out of vanity. I seemed but a boy in years to Mrs. Dunleith, and she affected to treat me as such. What broke down her guard, and enlightened me as to her feelings, was her jealousy of Athole Lindsay. One night that jealousy burst forth as a slumbering fire long hidden may do, and then I found myself caught in that whirlwind of passion, reproach, and anger which some women call love.

The scene was terrible—the more so because unexpected, and, by me, certainly undeserved. I soothed her as best I could, and, in somewhat cowardly fashion, perhaps, made light of her suspicions with regard to Athole. I declared that there was no engagement between us, and the announcement seemed to content her. Then, to cut the Gordian knot of my difficulties,

and seeing that the Laird of Corriemoor was very much in earnest in his attentions, I took myself off suddenly, and without notice or farewell to either Mrs. Dunleith or Athole.

I went to Edinburgh, and sulked there in smouldering misery, that longed to vent itself on some one, and yet was perfectly aware of its own inability to do so. It had been selfish and self-sought, and I could see no way out of it.

A braver and more unselfish nature would never have set itself to win a young girl's heart and love for no better purpose than its own gratification.

I see that all so plainly now; but I did not see it then—or was it that I needed the sharp touch of sorrow's lash to teach me my lesson? In a state of wrath, disgust, and dissatisfaction I lingered for a while in Edinburgh, and then wrote to Athole to free her from the obligation which I felt I had in some way forced upon her.

I think now that my letter must have seemed cruel to her, though I meant it for the best. In the mood I was in at that time I was not capable of calm or temperate judgement. I set her free, and perhaps only in those long weeks of silence that followed on her part, did I begin to feel how much I really cared for her.

Then Mrs. Dunleith appeared on the scene again. But she chose a new rôle now. The siren was laid aside, and the friend took her place. Tender sympathy, warm interest, frank and cordial companionship—these were all at my service, veiled now and then by some word, or tone, or look, which recalled, without alarming, the old memories and the old days.

I should have been more than mortal man had I resisted the gradual influence that was brought to bear upon my life at that time, when I was most reckless and most unhappy.

I wondered why a woman so beautiful, and so formed to attract men as Dora Dunleith, should care to waste her thoughts and attentions on me. I made but poor return, Heaven knows, yet she never seemed to resent my "brusquerie" or my coldness. Perhaps now that she knew her rival was out of the field she felt that she could wait with patience.

An older man might have yielded to the transient and subtle delights such intercourse and society afforded, if only to lull conscience and to win forgetfulness; but I only felt irritated, and ashamed at my own weakness.

In my love for Athole there had been purity and poesy, a reverence of the soul, a vague delight that made even self-torment a pleasure. It had been something to walk for miles only to see the light in her window, or to catch a glimpse of her sweet face from afar, or to run the chance of meeting her in the High Street with her inseparable companion, Bella Cameron. These are the foolish trivialities in which youth delights.

How my head aches to-night! How weary and disheartened I feel. I have been sitting in moody reflection over these pages, writing, and reading, and thinking, and in my heart cursing my folly, and wondering what possessed me to accept Dora Dunleith's proposition to go to Canada and seek my fortune.

What does fortune matter to me? For whose sake should I do battle with the world; at whose hand seek the guerdon of victory, or the soft sympathy that compassionates failure? There is no doubt that some natures need the ballast of another to steady and control them. Disappointment has a deteriorating effect; they plunge into dissipation as a distraction. Billiards, late hours, smoke, and drink, and play have the advantage of bringing temporary excitement or forgetfulness. Women, more wise, and hampered by worldly prejudices, and shut in by that thick-set hedge of conventionality which the innate weakness of the feminine heart knows as a safeguard, even if an irksome one—they, as I say, more wisely take to religion, or Sunday-school teaching, and are martyrs in a quiet, unimpassioned way of their own.

Perhaps they are less actively unhappy than we are; but the grey hues of hidden sorrow settle none the less surely over their lives.

How the wind howls to-night! Surely a storm is brewing. I can write no more; I will go up on deck and see how the weather looks.

After all, it is rather a womanish piece of weakness to commit the incidents of one's life to paper. But time hangs heavy on my hands here, and I have not yet fraternised much with my fellow-passengers.

CHAPTER II. WRECKED!

THE storm was raging frightfully when I stepped on deck. I could scarcely keep

my footing in the teeth of the furious gale.

As I clung to one of the shrouds, I saw a figure beside me occupied in the same endeavour to preserve his equilibrium.

It was that of a young man—one of my fellow-passengers whom I had noticed several times already. The singularity of his face and features, or rather the expression that stamped them, was sufficient to attract observation.

He was young enough in years, to all appearance; yet the face itself was one strangely impassive, the eyes cold and hard, the mouth drawn into firm lines, its expression bitter and cynical in a marked degree. The brow was lofty and intellectual—the brow of a student and a thinker—and at rare moments the eyes lost their hardness and indifference, and scintillated with excitement or interest. Now, as I glanced up at him, and saw them in the fitful moonlight that struggled through rifts of cloud, they were absolutely blazing with delight and excitement.

"It is magnificent, is it not?" he said to me, tossing back the dark waves of hair from his uncovered head, and looking like some spirit of the storm in his towering height, and with that strange, pale face, and those flashing eyes piercing the gloom, and disdainful the warfare of the elements. "How puny and weak, after all, is the skill of man against the forces of Nature! Who shall bridle the wind, and arrest the thunder-clouds, or steer the lightning flash on its wild flight! Look yonder at that seething mass! How the white horses toss their manes and gallop over the wild sea to-night! Oh, is it not grand, glorious, superb? What a pity that at such a time one cannot resolve oneself into something less material than flesh and blood, and enjoy it as the spirit of the tempest itself might do!"

I looked at him in some surprise. The words were strange, but no less strange were his look and aspect.

"It certainly is a grand sight," I agreed; "but scarcely enjoyable under present circumstances."

"There I differ from you," he said, the clear resonant tones of his voice sounding distinct even amidst the noise and fury of the blast. "At all times, and under all aspects, Nature is to me enjoyable. She and I have been close friends all the years of my life."

"You have travelled greatly?" I suggested, with another glance at the strange

face, unyouthful even in its youth, yet with something grand and majestic now in its defiant, fearless pose and flashing glances.

"Not half as much as I could desire," he said; "that is where life hits one so hard. In youth, we are bond-slaves to the possible enjoyments of a future, setting all our energies to work in order to achieve a goal that promises all we deem best. Does age ever fulfil those promises? I doubt it. The years pass, and Time lays a heavy hand upon our spirits and desires, our very nature alters, and the fruition we once upheld as bliss to our fond imagining becomes but Dead Sea fruit in our mouths at last."

"You talk very bitterly," I said.

A temporary lull had taken place; the wind blew with less fury; the driving clouds parted here and there to show some gleam of star or moon in the blue depths of unveiled sky. We were still standing side by side, still clinging to the stout cordage as support. The ship sped on over the foaming waters with scarce a yard of canvas spread from her bending masts.

My companion looked down at me for the first time.

"So you think I speak bitterly?" he said. "If so, Life has been my teacher; I can but speak of it as I have found it, and seen it. Who lives it as he intended? Who finds it as he imagined it? Who looks out from any standpoint on the moral, social, or physical scale, and can truthfully assert that it is anything but vexation and vanity? The wisest man the world has ever known said that; and his judgement will pass unchallenged for all time. Here and there comes a little sunshine, a little pleasure, a little hope; but set against them the toil and weariness, the sorrow and heartaches, the misery, and deception, and disappointment which we meet and cause as we journey along that road from youth to age, and dare then to say that the little good is not outweighed a thousandfold by the many evils; that the sips of pleasure are not as a drop in the ocean to the seas of grief! But, see, the storm rises again! We shall have a rough night of it."

"You seem rather to enjoy the prospect," I said, glancing somewhat enviously at the tall figure, and the fearless, defiant pose of the uncovered head, as the wind played at will amidst the dark, thick locks.

"Yes," he said, quietly, "I am altogether without fear; and yet I and danger have claimed pretty close acquaintance with each other in my time. I have been twice shipwrecked; but it has not destroyed my love of the sea. Nothing could do that."

I felt that I could not agree with him; indeed, I was already cold, and chilled, and wet with spray and rain, and felt more disposed to seek my cabin than to watch the storm renew its attentions.

I therefore bade my new acquaintance good night, and went below; though, I must confess, sleep was utterly impossible.

Wide awake I lay in my narrow berth, listening to the howling wind and the dashing waves, and the tramp of the sailors' feet on the deck above. How little there seemed between life and death on that wild ocean, in that wild night! Only a few planks—the weak armament of man against the warfare of the furious elements. I thought of my strange companion, and wondered if he were still on deck breasting the storm with that undaunted mien. I almost envied him his supreme enjoyment. I had certainly experienced more fear than pleasure at the sight of the raging sea, and the noise of the creaking timbers.

In the midst of my wakeful meditations I was roused by a fearful crash. I sprang up, and half dressed as I was, hurried on deck. One of the masts had broken, and lay half on, half over the deck—a mass of straining cordage and flapping canvas. The sailors were hewing vigorously at it; foremost among them towered the tall figure of my new acquaintance. His face was still calm and unmoved; his coolness and nerve seemed to encourage the men, and they laboured with a will at their task until the ship was free of the strain, and once more rode merrily over the wild waste of waters.

Five minutes later, however, a fresh alarm arose. We had sprung a leak, and the order was given to man the pumps.

For hours and hours—long after the grey dawn had broken—that weary labour went on. One and all—passengers and crew alike—we gave our willing aid; and again I noticed, foremost to help and encourage, and with the strength and zest of two ordinary men, that strange being who had seemed to me like the spirit of the storm itself.

As time went on, the reports grew more

and more disheartening; the leak was gaining on us, and the sea was still terribly heavy. The men's faces began to look gloomy, and their energies showed signs of the prolonged strain. The wind had abated somewhat, but the ship pitched and rolled in most distressing fashion in the great trough of heaving waters.

We had been driven miles out of our course, and the captain could only give a guess as to our whereabouts. Till near midday they laboured on at a task which grew hourly more hopeless. That the ship must be abandoned seemed a growing conviction in the minds of the men; but I must confess that it was with no pleasant feeling that I heard the order given to lower the boats. It seemed to me impossible that any boat could live in such a sea, and the gloomy faces around seemed to echo my conviction.

However, the time soon came when we were left with no other alternative. The leak was gaining on us so rapidly that the pumps were abandoned. Provisions and water were handed into the boats; the passengers collected a few clothes and valuables, and waited resignedly for the order to leave the vessel.

The captain, I, and the strange passenger—whose name I had learnt by this time was Huel Penryth—were the last to quit the doomed vessel. We cast off and lay at a little distance, watching her as she rolled, in that helpless water-logged manner, from side to side, each movement seeming as if it must be her last.

It was a melancholy spectacle, and one destined to live long in my memory. Suddenly she lifted her stern out of the boiling trough, and we saw her bows plunge forward. For a brief space she seemed almost standing upright, and I could not resist a shudder of horror as I looked. A moment, and the great waves rolled upwards like living things ready to seize upon their promised prey. Then came the rending sound of breaking spars and crashing timber, and downwards she plunged into the fathomless depths, and the boiling foam rushed seething and hissing over the place that should know her no more.

I looked around after the one involuntary exclamation which had escaped us. A grey sky half-obscured by mist; a waste of heaving water, on which our boat tossed like a cork. That was all I saw—that and the pale, grave faces of my fellow sufferers.

"May Heaven have mercy on us!" I cried below my breath; but the hopelessness and the peril of our situation seemed to mock that faint petition as we drifted on through the grey mists and the tossing clouds of foam.

DOYNES'S WONDERFUL DOGS.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"YES, it was a plucky thing, certainly; but I can't help thinking that the motive was not altogether an unmixed one. You see, Westminster Bridge is one of the best-known places in the world; and when a man jumps over its parapet to save a fellow-creature who is struggling in the tideway below, he is tolerably certain to be well repaid for his exertion. His bravery is lauded in the next morning's papers; he gets the Royal Humane Society's medal, and he is often handsomely rewarded besides. There are thousands of good swimmers in London who would avail themselves of a similar opportunity. You'd do it yourself."

"H'm, well, perhaps I should. But you are taking rather a cold-blooded view of the matter. There is some risk."

"Of course there is risk," replied Dr. Wane, rather contemptuously. "There is the chance of cramp, the chance of a bad cold. There was a possibility of the train which brought you down here leaving the track, and crashing over an embankment; but that doesn't make a hero of you for coming to see me."

"What are you driving at?"

"Simply this. That there is a great deal of rubbish talked about men making heroes of themselves, when they are merely encountering a certain degree of peril for their own self-advancement. Now, in my idea that kind of selfishness can never be linked to true heroism. For instance, I can see nothing heroic about a jump from the clouds beneath a parachute, when the only incentive is money."

"I am afraid you will nearly always find a sordid motive of that kind at the bottom if you only probe deep enough."

"Generally, I grant you. But there are instances to the contrary. A village doctor does not often see much beyond the general routine; but I give you my word for it, I did once come across a real heroine. Now what do you say to an hour's écarté, and then bed?"

And Dr. Wane lit his pipe, and appeared anxious to change the subject.

"Tell me about your heroine first. Did she pull some one out of the river here, and then run away without leaving her name?"

"Nothing so dramatic. I don't think the story would interest you. Pass the matches."

But my curiosity was aroused, and after a little pressing he consented to tell it me.

"Your train arrived," he said, "just after the curtain had dropped, and the heroine of the piece had gone off to take up an engagement on another stage. Did you happen to see a caravan, a dingy, yellow-painted house on wheels, as you walked here from the station? It was in a field on your right hand."

"I can't say that I did."

"Very likely not. It would scarcely catch your eye unless you had looked for it. Yet it lay there all the same, an aged-looking concern, with 'Doynes's Wonderful Dogs' painted on the outside. It is one of the regular sort that go round to the fairs and feasts in this neighbourhood, only perhaps a trifle inferior to most of them. It was here about the middle of the summer, when first I came to this place; and out of curiosity I went to see it amongst the others. There were just about half-a-dozen dogs—mangy mongrels all, with the exception of a grey-muzzled collie—and they were put through their paces by a girl who seemed to run the show entirely by herself. She was my heroine."

Wane put his pipe into his mouth here, and struck a match, as if to signify that was all, but an expectant "Yes" from his auditor hinted to him to proceed.

"Well," he said, "I noticed in May that she was looking fearfully knocked up—half-starved, in fact; which wasn't to be wondered at, as there were not more than half-a-dozen others beside myself in the tent, and we only paid a penny apiece for the performance. But a week ago, when the caravan passed through here en route for somewhere else, she broke down entirely, and that was when I first found out all about her. She is twenty-three now, it seems—twenty-three last week; and just ten years ago her step-mother turned her out of doors. Poor child, she had had a hard life of it. She lost her own mother when she was two, and her father married again. Then he died, and the wife 'took on' with a collier, who had a family of his own. Both of them ill-treated her

abominably; and finally, as I have said, turned her out of doors. She didn't know where to go to; she hadn't a friend in the world, poor little mite, or a relation either, that she knew of, for the matter of that; and so she wandered out of the place, and sat down and shivered on a bank. Never before had she been outside the town of her birth. It was night, and raining, and the passers-by, of whom there were few, never noticed her. Not that she minded much; she was too numbed with misery for that—cold, hungry, wretched, and dulled with despair.

"Presently a dog came and sniffed at her. Good sort of creatures, dogs, aren't they; especially stray ones! You always see them chumming up to people who are in trouble. Well, she patted the beast, and when its owner came by, he saw the two of them together.

"'Ulllo,' said he—he was Doynes, by the way—'what're you a-doin' 'ere! G'long 'ome wi' yer.'

"'Ain't got no 'ome.'

"'Ow's that?'

"'Mother's turned me out, and she says she'll rive t' 'eart out o' me if I goes back agaan. An' she'll do it an' all.'

"Now I don't know whether Doynes was moved by the idea that this was a good opportunity to pick up a much-desired assistant cheap, or by the child's evident misery. I should imagine the former. But any way, he asked:

"'Will yer come along wi' me?'

"On being answered 'Yes,' he stowed Liz inside his conveyance, fed her, gave her a shake-down on the floor, and then drove on. And that was how Liz became enrolled among the exhibiting staff of the Performing Dogs.

"He was a happy-go-lucky sort of chap, this Doynes, never troubling himself particularly about anything, whether it was business or pleasure, religion or honesty. He drank when he felt inclined, sometimes in moderation, sometimes in excess; and ate when he was hungry. He was not intellectual-looking, by any means, but he was rather clever with dogs, and knew a good deal about their value and capabilities. As a matter of fact, Doynes was not his name at all, but it was the only one by which he was known. He bought it when he bought the show from the original Doynes, who, by strict attention to business, had raised himself to the dizzy eminence of the third-rate music hall stage—and a professorship—and his own name

sank gracefully amongst the mists of the past. Liz, too, assimilated the surname of Doynes. At first she was simply known as 'Doynes's Liz,' but of later years she became Liz Doynes; and her real patronymic also is not even a matter of history now.

"Accustomed, as she had been, to ceaseless labour and thankless toil, the child found her new life on the caravan one of comparative ease and enjoyment. She had merely to look after the horse and the dogs, to do the cooking and the washing, to keep the caravan something like tidy, and to take off Doynes's boots when he was too drunk to perform that office for himself; and when these duties had been attended to she was quite at liberty to amuse herself in any way she saw fit. Doynes never meddled with her, except to bestow an occasional cuff if the dogs didn't perform well, or a similar forcible reminder if the tripe supper wasn't cooked to his taste. But, on the other hand, he never gave her a sixpence to spend. Twice a year he presented her with a cheap new frock and bonnet, and at erratic intervals he would produce undergarments, culled, like blackberries, from some convenient hedge. And she usually had shoes or boots—of a kind.

"So that, on the whole, Liz—whose standard was not a high one—found her new life nearly all that she could wish for or expect. She usually had plenty to eat, and that was to her the principal blessing of life. She had a cosy bunk, and an old horse-cloth by way of coverlet; and although Doynes's night quarters were merely separated off by a very sketchy curtain, this would have satisfied her most fantastic scruples of decency if they had ever arisen—which they never did. Of variety, she had a never-ending supply. Show folks are very gregarious, and so she possessed heaps of acquaintances; and there were always the dogs—and Doynes.

"In summer things were pretty prosperous, for the dogs 'took' well, and their keep was not costly; besides this, Doynes was such a skilful forager, that he usually managed to get poultry and vegetables for absolutely nothing. But as the 'publics' captured most of his hard cash in the prosperous season—for Doynes was a convivial soul, and adored beer—they were generally hard put to it in winter to make both ends meet. They lived in the caravan then just the same, only they kept it stationary, and hired the horse out to any one who would take him; and when they

got very hard up—not before, though, for he objected to toil—Doynes would contrive to get hold of an odd job. And so things were kept going; somewhat erratically, it is true; but a stoppage was always prevented.

“When Liz had been at this game a couple of years, Doynes, acting on a happy inspiration which grew from the hint of one of his cronies, invested in a second-hand pair of tights and a spangled tunic, from a peripatetic circus-proprietor, and, henceforward, Liz put the dogs through their paces herself. The girl was good-looking in a way. She'd got a wild, fierce sort of beauty, which seems to grow with this kind of life—strong, black hair, you know, and fine dark violet eyes, and good figure—and she drew larger houses than Doynes had done. And that is not to be wondered at, seeing that he is a heavy-looking brute, rather of the jail-bird type. She liked the job; Doynes fully appreciated a change which gave him more money and less to do; the dogs preferred Liz's ‘suaviter in modo’ to Doynes's ‘fortiter in re’; and so the arrangement suited all parties. But still Liz's pecuniary circumstances remained unaltered. There was no particular secret made of this. Doynes openly boasted that he was a gentleman now, for he got all his work done for nothing; and no one ever suggested that Liz had any money. And although she may at times have felt the need of it, she never struck out for a regular salary.

“She might easily have done so, had she wished, for outside offers were not wanting. One of the young women from ‘Cole's Imperial Shooting Gallery’ had eloped with a rich American, and Liz was asked to take the vacant tube—her board, keep, and eight shillings per week. The proprietor and acting-manager of ‘Fitzgerald's Theatre of Varieties’ said he'd give her a two per cent share of the profits if she'd play boys' parts for him; and the owner of a ‘Saccharine Refreshment Caravan’ offered her a co-partnership and a loving heart if she'd join him. But no, unaccountable as it may seem, Liz laughed and said she'd stick to Doynes's; and to Doynes's she stuck.

“‘Liz is a rum un,’ Doynes's friends would say to him; but Doynes would only chuckle and wink, and remark that he'd have ‘another pot o' the same.’ And so things went on, Liz doing, by very visible gradations, more and more, and Doynes

less and less, till at last he was never near the show at all, except when it was on the move, and then he lay indolently in his bunk.

“Liz's friends among the show-folks used to comment on these habits of Doynes's pretty freely and pointedly; but Liz would always laugh in a cheerful sort of way, and say, ‘Oh, never mind t'lad; 'e's allus fearful dry, an' likes ter sleek hissen.’ (‘Sleek’ in her dialect meant moisten.) But, all the same, she gave him good, sharp lectures on the quiet, and he would swear, by all his dogs, by his caravan, by his eyes, by everything he held sacred, in fact, that he'd not touch a drop of liquor for a month. And then when the tent was pitched once more, he would slip off with a jolly laugh, and not put in an appearance again till ‘turning-out time.’ And Liz, quite unconcernedly, would shift the platform across to the entrance-end of the tent, so that she could guard the door after the money was taken, and put the dogs through their paces at the same time.

“But at last a climax came.

“They were at a village ‘tide’ in the dales here, and she had squared up for the night, and was patiently waiting for Doynes's return. The day had been a hot one, and as he had plenty of money in his pocket she philosophically expected him to make a wet night of it. But half-past eleven and twelve struck by the church clock, and no Doynes came. She began to get anxious. He usually contrived to bring himself or be brought to the caravan before this. Half-past twelve! He must be back directly now. One! He has gone to sleep somewhere. One-thirty! She put a shawl over her head, and opened the door with the intention of going to look for him. By the pale moonlight, which illuminated the paper-strewn ground and the scattered encampment, she saw half-a-dozen men carrying something on a sheep hurdle. Close to her was an avant-courier, in whom she recognised Signor Roberto Valtolaki, of the ‘Royal Marionette Theatre,’ commonly known as Dolly Bobs.

“‘Is he very bad, Dolly?’ she asked, anxiously, for experience had taught her that an ordinary ‘drunk’ took only a couple of bearers, or three at the outside.

“‘Ay, lass, an' 'e's appened a haxident an' all. 'E wer' liggin' im dahn i' t' road—blind—an' Jabez 'Olroyd's cart run ower im. They fotched t' docter, but 'e sez

'e cannot do ote for 'im. I'm right grieved for thee, lass. 'Appen tha'd best go sleep along wi' my missis, an' to leave me to stay along o' 'im !'

"Here the bearers brought the impromptu ambulance to the door, and the sympathetic moonlight showed Doynes's ghastly paleness.

"'No, 'e ain't dead, Liz,' answered Dolly Bobs in response to her enquiry, 'an' mebbe 'e won't type out fer yeres ef 'e's properly tended on, docter says. Nah thee get thee gone to my ole woman, an' we'll tak' 'im in !'

"But Liz refused. 'Lift him up,' she said, 'an' then go, please. 'E's used ter me, is Doynes. I'll sit up an' watch.' And she insisted, and they obeyed.

"In the morning a new trial awaited her. A great country boor knocked at the door, and she answered it. He, too, had been enjoying himself over-night, and he wasn't sober even then.

"'A've comed fer thee,' he remarked with a malty leer.

"Liz naturally did not understand, and so the brute explained that Doynes had sold her to him the night before for twelve shillings and a bottle of whisky.

"'But I'm not his to sell,' replied Liz, as quietly as she could. 'Besides, he was drucken, and got a'most killed last night.'

"'Ar care note abast that,' exclaimed this interesting person, with a good deal of bad language levelled at the head of the injured Doynes; 'ar wants thee; an' as ar've paid for tha', ar'm bahn ter 'ave tha'.' And he tried to clutch her wrist.

"'Listen,' said Liz. And those black eyes of hers shone so fiercely that the fellow took a step or two backwards involuntarily. 'You see all these people about!'—waving her hand towards the show-folk who were packing up—'they're all my friends. If I calls 'em and tells 'em what you're wanting they'll kick t' life out on yer. And that's a true. But I don't want 'em to know as 'e'—with a backward nod of her dishevelled head, to indicate the invisible Doynes—'ad anythink to do wi' this yer; an' so I'll stan' to a quid if you'll clear out quiet.'

"'Hand out,' said the would-be husband, laconically, and as Liz had luckily got the receipts of the last night's performances still by her, she did so, and got rid of the difficulty. Then she fed the dogs, who were calling noisily for their breakfasts, and putting on her hat hastened off to the doctor's.

"'I want you to tell me square-out what's the matter with Doynes,' she said.

"Thinking it would be a kindness not to mince matters at all, the doctor told her that he was completely paralysed in the lower limbs, and would always remain so; that with careful nursing he might live for years, but that nothing could ever make him walk again.

"'Had he any relations?'

"'No.'

"'Or friends who would take him?'

"'No; he's nobody but me.'

"'Oh, you are his—er—er—daughter?'

"'No.'

"'Ah! beg pardon—wife?'

"'No.'

"'Humph! Sister then, and——'

"'No, not even sister,' said Liz, with alight confusion. 'There's nothin' atwixt us at all. We'se just—frans.'

"'Then, my good girl, you had better send him to the workhouse.'

"'No, I'm blessed if I do,' said Liz, and she bounced out of the room and slammed the door behind her.

"Well, there was a nice kick-up amongst the show-folks when it was announced that Liz was going to keep the helpless Doynes with her, and not pack him off as prudence dictated to the tender care of the Paupers' Mansion. Mrs. Dolly Bobs, who slept and lived in the same small compartment with two grown-up sons and a daughter, besides her husband, said 'it wasn't decent'; the landlord of the inn, who had fingered much of Doynes's money, and so spoke as an old friend, perhaps, really thought 'the 'Ouse was good enough for the likes o' it'—meaning Doynes—and said so to every one who was curious on the point; and the parson, too, a pasty-faced young fool, who hadn't been ordained three years, came and exhorted her to the same effect; but Liz was losing patience, and was distinctly rude to him.

"She stayed at the place where the accident had happened for a little over a fortnight, and tended Doynes with the most delicate care, although, when speech returned, his groans of self-pity would have driven any one else distracted; and as by that time she had sold everything that would sell, except the dogs—the exchequer was empty to start with—she harnessed the old horse in the shafts, and started off to the nearest fair, which was luckily not many miles away. Thanks to Doynes's previous laziness, she was quite capable of doing, everything by herself,

and she declared to me that this new era of her life was not an atom harder than the one which went before. In fact, she said it was easier, because the knowledge that Doynes wanted little comforts, which cost extra money, made the getting of it seem lighter.

"'O' course,' she told me, with a mischievous flash of those black eyes of hers, 'o' course, vittles is dearer now, 'cause I ain't s'andy at pickin' up things as 'e was; but then, when we get's 'em my way we ken eat 'em when we likes, an' don't 'ave to bolt 'em in a hurry. Lord! I mind 'im an' me an' the dogs wolfin' a goose in ten minutes once; an' none too soon neither, fer they come to look fer it whiles we was a-pickin' our teeths!'

"Winters were the hardest times; the first one especially. It was difficult to lay by any money for the hard season, and more difficult still to earn any in it. Liz would sometimes get an odd sixpence or perhaps a shilling by doing a bit of washing or baking, but these windfalls were precarious. Dwellers in cities don't like Iahmaelites, and all respectable people fight shy of a young woman that lives with a man who is no relation to her.

"But, as Liz said, in her bright, cheery way, 'We allus worried through some'ow; an' if Doynes didn't get 'is poort, 'e never went w'out a sup o' beer.'

"She starved herself to let Doynes have luxuries.

"And so things went on till last winter, which, as you know, was an exceptionally hard one; and then troubles came down upon them thick and fast. The horse—a sorry beast—died, and with him passed away a steady source of income; the clever collie—not the one which found her originally, but his successor—was poisoned; and he was the best dog of the troupe; the caravan—which was very old and rotten—began to leak badly all over, and they could not afford to get it satisfactorily repaired, though Liz did all she could with painted canvas and tin-tacks; Doynes got very feeble and sickly, and required constant nourishment and attention; there was a 'strike' in the neighbourhood, and, consequently, no work to be obtained; and, finally, Liz herself contracted a cough which racked her continually, and made her, as she expressed it, 'as fond, an' feeble, an' doddery as a new-born pup.'

"It was a terrible struggle that winter;

and when spring came, Liz carried the marks of it clearly. Her black eyes were more brilliant than ever, and her once healthy brown cheeks were now sunken, and reddened with a dangerous hectic flush. She hired a horse for the road—a piebald beast belonging to 'Van Davey's American Cirque,' which necessitated her always following in the wake of that equestrian exhibition, and made a large hole in her own takings.

"'But,' she said, with a feeble attempt at the old cheerfulness, 'luck was down. The tent was dirty and patched, and my props was very much the same, an' though I might bawl mysel' 'oarse outside, an' say as Doynes's wonderful dogs was wonderfuller nor ever, most people 'ud take me at my word, an' only a few 'ud come to see if it was so. An' when they did come inside, they'd only larf, or may be get riled at the sell, for the dogs was really orful bad. They was willin' enough, most of 'em, but they seemed to 'a lost their brains. Doynes e'd 'a fixed 'em up right enough; 'e wor clever wi' dogs, 'e wor, an' could teach 'em ote. 'E could 'a whacked talkin' into 'em, if he wanted, I believe; but I'—regretfully—'cannot ketch 'is stroke some'ow.

"'Ye'd be surprised to see 'ow thoughtful them dogs is sometimes, now. They seems to know when grub's scarce, just as we does, an' they'll not 'owl 'arf so 'ard for their dinner when they see me and Doynes is a bit down i' the mug. In course they dces bark a bit when their stomachs is empty, but allus in an apologisin' sort o' way, like as if they was ashamed o' theirsels for doin' it. An' then when I pats 'em, an' tells 'em I'm very sorry, but there ain't anythink for 'em to eat, they'll wag their tails as much as to say, "We catches your meanin' an' winks," an' then they'll go out an' prig as natteral as any Christian.

"'But latterly I've been so bothered wif this yer cough, that I kinder frighten people away, an' so Doynes's vittles 'as been worse ner ever. But 'e's been very good about it. 'E 'asn't grumbled much sin' 'e saw as I couldn't 'elp it. The other show-folks says as 'e's a selfish brute, but they're liars, liars every one on 'em. Didn't 'e pick me up when I was a snivelling little brat by t' road-side, an' 'asn't 'e kep' me wif him ever sin' t'?

"Poor lass, she struggled bravely against her illness, often keeping on her legs through sheer force of will when weakness made everything seem to swim before her.

But when she arrived here with a lot of others for the village tide—as they call the feast—just a week ago, the tent in which Doynes's Performing Dogs were wont to perform was not set up. Dolly Bobs came sneaking in here late at night in mortal fear of his wife—for Liz was a pariah amongst her people—and told me why, and gave me Liz's history as far as he knew it. He came really to relieve his conscience, I believe, by asking me to go and see her, evidently doubting whether I would do so when no pay was forthcoming—sordid old brute.

"Of course, I did go; and I found things even worse than he had told me. The caravan was a fearfully dilapidated old rattle-trap, weatherbeaten and rotten to the last degree; and but for a couple of mangy mongrel curs which were crouching on the steps, there wasn't a sign of life about it. The battered tin chimney gave out no smoke; both doors were closely shut; the windows were half covered with painted imitations of curtains. I knocked and went in. Everything was frightfully ruinous and poverty-stricken, and there was plenty of evidence to show that nothing had been done in the tidying line lately. There was a bunk against each wall at the opposite end. In one of them the bearded face of a man of about five or eight-and-thirty showed itself; in the other lay a woman, young, still good-looking, but terribly emaciated, and evidently in the last stage of consumption.

"'Are you the doctor?' she asked. And I told her that I was, and that Valtolaki had sent me in to see her.

"'Yes, yes,' she said, hurriedly, 'an' it's very kind o' yer to come to t' likes o' me. But see Doynes; 'e's been orful bad to-day. It ain't ketchin' 'im in 'is back where it used, but 'igher up lika. An' there's a somethin' i' 'is throat as makes 'im 'e don't want to eat, sir. There's a beautiful piece o' biled 'am aside 'im.'

"And as poor Liz indicated the viand in question, I could see that she considered this refusal to eat when food was actually within his reach, as the most dangerous symptom of all. In his case also the diagnosis was a simple one. He might live a week, or a couple of days, or a few hours; or he might die in a matter of minutes.

"'I'll send him some beef-tea,' I told her.

"'But med'cin'—give 'im some med'cin' as well, an' I'll pay yer wi' the first brass we gets; I will, s'welp me bob.'

"It is extraordinary what faith these people put in drugs. However, not that all the physic in the world would have done him any good, but merely to pacify her, I said: 'Oh, yes, of course; it will come with the beef-tea.' And then I tried to hint to her how dangerously ill she was herself. But she burst out into a torrent of abuse—probably because I had confirmed her own ideas—and finished up by saying, vehemently:

"'I maustn't, I cannot die, I willn't die! There's Doynes there as helpless as 'e can be, was'n usual, in fact, an' if I types out, who's to look arter 'un? No,' she continued, excitedly, raising herself on one elbow, 'it's no use yer 'intin' at them outside—the other show-folks. They'd send 'im to the 'Ouse, they would, like as they wanted to do afore. But 'o's mine, mine—all mine, an' 'e shalln't be took away! Doctor,' she went on, first sinking back out of sheer exhaustion, and then raising herself up again, and clutching at my hand with the feverish energy of despair, 'doctor, yer will gi'e me suttin' to mak' me strong agen, willn't yer? Suttin' as 'll let me work the show agen, and get Doynes bits o' stuff as 'e likes. Oh, if ye nobbut knew 'ow it wor'! 'Im an' the dogs 'as been the only things I'se ever 'ad to—to—like; an' though folks sez dogs is best, I don't care—it's 'im, it's Doynes, as I wants t'hang on fer.'

"Well, there she fainted slick away; and from then till now I've been messing around that old caravan the most of my time. I dare say"—brusquely—"you think me a bit of a fool for doing it; but I couldn't help myself. Besides, there was no one else. The parson—who is a very good fellow in his way, but lacking of tact—tried his hand; but Liz sent him about his business very quickly when he started lecturing her about her 'want of resignation,' as he was pleased to term it; and she can be pretty free with her tongue when she likes. Most of those sort of people can be; it's part of their business, you know. And the natives, for some reason or other, refused to go near.

"I was there this morning, as usual, and hardly expected the girl to live another hour. Indeed, she might have died any minute, and it was her will alone that kept her alive.

"'How's 'e?' she would mutely ask every few minutes or so; and when I told her, she would seem satisfied.

"And so it went on till about an hour

before you arrived here. Then Doynes suddenly stopped breathing. She noticed it immediately—noticed it, in fact, before I did, and bade me look at him.

"He was dead, and I told her so.

"She smiled feebly and beckoned me down nearer to her, and, by laying my ear close against her lips, I could just make out the words above the pattering of the rain on the roof :

"'Told yer so—didn't die whiles 'e might want me. Say!—sell the caravan—give! Doynes—swell funeral—and——'

"But that was all. She had hastened after Doynes."

ON THE WAR-PATH.

HEAD-QUARTERS.

A GOOD many years ago there was a certain Methodist preacher with an apparent genius for touching and moving his congregation. A split with his connection removed him from that sphere of action, and apparently without knowing it himself, he, by his open-air preachings and strangely hearty services, laid the foundation of the Salvation Army. The movement began definitely with the formation of an East London Christian Revival Society, which was soon developed into an East London Christian Mission; and the Methodist preacher became gradually reconciled to the idea of a permanent organisation or settled plan. In 1866 the Mission entered into the first real head-quarters, in the Whitechapel Road, and since then the Mission has grown into the Army, the Army has extended almost all over the world, and—whether for good or evil is not to be discussed here—has become a very considerable fact. How large, indeed, can be gathered if we take some figures from the "Field State," which is published monthly. At the end of November last year, there were altogether in the British Isles thirteen hundred and sixty-four corps, and the staff of workers included the following: five hundred and eighty-one International Staff and employés; one hundred and eighteen officers connected with the Divisional offices; twenty-one Depot Staff and scribes; seventy-two Depot Officers; one hundred and forty-five Rescue Staff and assistants; one hundred and eighty-four workers in the slums; forty Divisional scribes and specials; two thousand five hundred and six Field Officers: that is, the workers in the various

ordinary corps; four hundred and seventy-two Field Officers' wives; thirty-eight Household Troops' Bandmen; and four hundred and sixty-three cadets in Depôts. This gives a grand total of four thousand six hundred and fifty-one. If we take in all foreign corps in addition, we swell the total of corps to two thousand nine hundred and twenty-five, and of workers to nine thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight.

Of course, the organisation and mere office work of this great body involve a prodigious amount of work, and it may be interesting to our readers if we give them an account of this organisation, which will be found to be very complete and exact—all affairs of every corps, to the smallest detail, being so summarised and brought to Head-quarters, that, at a moment's notice, they can be turned up and referred to. In the following description, members of the Salvation Army must be understood to be officers—that is, those who have elected to give all their work and time to extending and promoting the Army—the ordinary soldiers being members only in the sense that they attend services, and so on, just as we of different denominations may attend our different places of worship.

For the proper understanding of the working of the Head-quarters, the first place to be visited is what is termed the Home Office—Head-quarters of the Salvation Army. These offices are in Queen Victoria Street, above Blackfriars Station and facing the Embankment, consisting of three floors. Most certainly there is not too much room for the work, almost every available inch of space being utilised. The best mode of inspection will be, not to take each floor by itself, but the different offices, as they in turn affect the Salvationist, beginning from the time when he is first accepted for the work.

The first department is the Candidates' Department, to which come all applications, from all parts of the British Isles, from those who wish to join the Army. When a member of a local corps thinks that he—throughout the Army no distinction is made between the sexes, so perhaps it will be best for us to always treat the individual as a man—would like to give up all his work and labour only for the extension of the Army, he applies to Head-quarters for a set of candidates' papers. The first paper he has to fill up himself, and contains seventy-seven different questions, some of

which seem ridiculous to any outsider, others of which seem to be dictated by good, sound common sense. Of course, one not joining in the work would think such questions as: "Have you ever been a backslider? If so, for how long?" somewhat absurd, but there can be only praise for the questions which ask as to whether the candidate has any persons dependent on him, whether his parents are agreeable to his joining, and such like practical matters. Then the Captain of the corps to which the candidate belongs has to fill up a paper containing sixty questions, mostly as to whether or no the man is likely to become a good officer, as to his zeal, his character, and so on. The Treasurer or Secretary of his corps also has to send in a backing form, as does also the District or Divisional Officer.

England is divided into Divisions as follows: London, Birmingham, Leicester, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Carlisle, Channel Islands, and Cheshire, while the London and Bristol Divisions are divided into three Districts. The next paper which a candidate has to send in is a medical certificate; and as to this the authorities are very particular—any candidate being refused if the medical certificate is against him, no matter how much in his favour the other papers may be. Among the questions asked on the certificate-form are ones as to the condition of the candidate's heart and lungs—both most necessary, the latter most particularly so, if we may judge from the sounds we sometimes hear from meetings at street-corners. The last paper—and this is never sent out unless all the others are satisfactory—is a form which is sent to the candidate's employer for his character. If all papers are correct, and the candidate is received, the papers do not go before the chief officer at Head-quarters; but all cases in which refusal is likely go before the Commandant, who rules supreme at Head-quarters. It will be seen from all these forms and papers that the authorities of the Salvation Army by no means accept everybody, but are somewhat particular as to whom they receive as officers. All these papers are preserved at Head-quarters—each candidate's papers being put into a paper-case by themselves, and all the names being entered up in books kept for the purpose. There are at present stored round the offices where this work is done some fourteen thousand of these cases. In these offices, sometimes, candi-

dates about whom the authorities are doubtful are employed on probation.

Our candidate has now been accepted by the authorities, and is duly passed into one of the Training Garrisons, which at present number twenty-eight, and comes under the supervision of the Training Garrison Department at Head-quarters. In the garrison he lives, and, as the title implies, is trained for the work which he has undertaken. He goes through a course of lessons—in Scripture, rules of field work, and the doctrine and discipline of the Salvation Army. These lessons occupy four mornings a week; two afternoons a week he is out visiting—presumably something like district-visiting—two or three afternoons a week he is out selling the "War Cry" and the other Salvation Army publications; and one afternoon a week he has to himself. In addition to this, the inmates of the Training Garrisons do all the house-work, and attend meetings every night; while about once a fortnight there is a general meeting of cadets for the purpose of hearing a lecture from the Commandant or Commissioner. This course of training takes from five to seven months; sometimes longer. At the end of this time the candidates are collected from the various garrisons for a final session at the Clapton Congress Hall, where they go through a finishing course, which lasts about ten days. This course consists of lectures, reading drills—not, as might appear, elocution drills, but so much time a day spent in reading—and an examination. Having passed this, and being found suitable—and very few are found unsuitable, owing to the care of selection in the Candidates' Department—they receive their commissions either as Lieutenants, or Captains, and pass on to the Appointment Department.

This department has the decision as to every officer's station, when he has received his commission and is sent to the field. From this department money is issued to enable officers to proceed to the corps to which they may have been appointed. All moving-about of officers is done as cheaply as is possible, consistently with reasonable comfort. Thus, in the summer, the various coasting-steamers are much employed; but in winter such journeys are considered too trying. Each appointment lasts six months, after which time the officer is moved by the Appointment Department to another corps—the department being kept in-

formed by the various Divisional Officers of their needs in the matter of officers. In the case of married officers, efforts are made to appoint them to several different corps close to each other, to save the extra expense of moving; but unmarried men may be suddenly ordered off to the opposite end of England by this powerful department. The authorities here have all questions of promotion from Lieutenant to Captain brought before them; and also have to decide on all questions of monetary relief to officers who, for any reason, are receiving inadequate pay—not that the pay ever seems to be more than just enough to keep body and soul together. Finally, this department has to consider and decide upon all questions as to dropping an officer. In the Divisional or District Officer's report as to the condition of his various corps in the matter of officers, there is a column in which he can mention any officer whom he considers unsatisfactory in his work, and who, he thinks, should be dropped. This important motion comes before the Appointment Department, which must have quite as much work to get through as it can find time for.

The next department we come to—having carried our candidate through, and having seen him sent to the field, we will take the departments as they come—is the Statistical Department, and here the system of forms and papers and entering and re-entering, is worthy of the largest Government office, with the result that Headquarters are kept in most perfect touch with the various Divisions, Districts, and corps.

From every corps throughout the country a report is sent in every week to the Divisional Office, signed by Captain, Lieutenant, and Treasurer or Secretary. This report contains all information concerning the corps—attendances at all meetings, number of members, number of "War Cry" sold, and every detail connected with that corps. In addition to this report, a Sergeant-Major's report, signed by Captain and Secretary, is also sent in. A Treasurer's report—a copy of the cash-book of the corps—signed by Treasurer, Secretary, and Captain, is also sent in weekly, and lastly the Secretary's report is sent in monthly. All the information from these forms is collected by the Divisional Secretary, and by him entered into his book. Every month this book is totalled up, and the average results of

each corps are then copied out, signed by the Divisional Officer, and sent up to the Statistical Department. Here they are again copied into the Head-quarters books, under the headings of separate corps, so that reference can be made at a moment's notice to any corps, and its results and condition promptly ascertained. In the same way the results of Districts and Divisions are totalled and arranged, so that the general results of these can also be easily seen.

Closely connected with the Statistical Department, and working by means of information received from it, is the Watching Department. When a corps is reported to be going down and losing strength, the eye of the Watching Department is cast over it to see the reason of the decline, to find out whether it is the fault of the officers in charge, or in the public mind, which, in that particular place, is not to be allured by the sound of trumpets and drums. The officer of a corps in such a case is changed for one well known to the authorities as an energetic worker. If the corps still goes down, another change is tried, and if still no good ensues, the corps is reluctantly abandoned. Sometimes it proves to be the fault of the officer, in which case it is suggested to him that he might find a more useful field for his energies.

The next department we come across is the Marriage Department. No officer of the Salvation Army is allowed to engage himself to be married without the consent of this department. Application is made to this department, forms are sent by it to the Divisional Officers of both parties, which contain questions as to the applicant's work, leave being only given to successful officers. Each couple must be engaged for at least twelve months, and no man may marry under twenty-three years of age. Breaking off an engagement, unless for a very good reason, invariably leads to dismissal. Indeed, the authorities seem to be most careful about marriages, and do their best to prevent subsequent disappointment. For instance, no officer can marry except within the Army, so that if a man falls in love and wishes to marry a girl outside the Army—a girl, it may be, who lives in a comfortable home—and applies for leave to become engaged to her, leave is granted on the condition that she first joins the Army, and serves with one corps, in order that before the actual engagement is ratified she may have some experience of the life which in future she will have to live. Ar-

the life of a Salvation Army officer does not seem to be quite a bed of roses.

The next office we visit is that of the Intelligence Department. This department has the duty of investigating all charges brought against officers, and finding out whether they are weighty enough to be taken notice of. The majority of the charges come from outside sources, and in most cases are utterly unfounded. In the event of a charge being considered weighty, the offender has the choice of placing his case in the hands of the Commandant, or of being tried by a court-martial, consisting of two officers of his own rank and one of superior rank as president. If the charge is proved, the offender is dismissed, nobody being kept as an officer who does not come thoroughly up to the Salvationist standard. If the officer be dismissed, his fare is paid from his station to where he wishes to go, and, if possible, he is helped by a small grant of money, or by some other means, to obtain work. Another matter to which this department gives its attention is the question of the reacceptance of officers who have resigned on account of ill-health, and who, having recovered, wish to rejoin the Army. This department has the duty of considering and deciding upon all such applications.

Now we come to an important department—the Audit Department. From this department officers are constantly travelling about examining the books of different corps. The books of every corps are audited once a year, while the divisional account-books are audited every six months, a balance-sheet from each division being sent to Head-quarters once a month.

Then we have the Demonstration Department, from which all special processions, country tours, and special journeys are arranged; next, there are the Cashier's Office, with Enquiry Office, London Division and Garrison Cashier, and Home Office Cashier; and, finally, we have the Post Office, through which every letter coming to or going from the building passes—every letter coming in, unless addressed to the Commandant or Chief Secretary, being opened here.

This completes the description of this building, and from it we pass on to 101, Queen Victoria Street, which contains the Foreign Office, which has somewhat the same relations with foreign corps as the Home Office has with corps in the British Isles—of course, the smaller details have to be settled in the chief centre of the

particular country—and also various other important departments, which we will take as they come in the building. And a most complicated building it is, containing, as it does, the whole of No. 101, the upper floors of No. 99, and extending back and taking in the house in the rear, which reaches down to Thames Street.

The first series of departments consists of those relating to Foreign countries and Colonies, for the most part similar to those at the Home Office; but in addition there are the Foreign Despatch and the Shipping Offices, in connection with Foreign affairs. Passing on, the next department is the Property Department. Here we have the Rents Offices, from which all matters connected with the rents of the buildings occupied by the various local corps are arranged; and the Property Purchase Department for investigating and reporting to the board upon proposed sites and buildings. The Property Finance Department comes next, having all questions as to raising and paying money for sites and buildings. Connected with this department is a Savings Bank, in which any sum, from a shilling upwards, can be invested. This has only just been started, and promises to be a great success.

The last of the Property Departments is the Property Conveyancing Department. Connected with this is the Solicitor's Offices, rooms where all leases and agreements are made out, typewriting done, and all the various forms necessary for the transfer of property prepared. Then we come to the Common Law Department, the Architect's Department, and the Repairs Department, all of which by their names sufficiently show what they are without description. The next we see is the Press Office, in which all press notices and newspaper cuttings are preserved and pasted in big scrap-books, for future reference if necessary.

But here we have a most important department—the Financial Secretary's Department. The first duty of this department is the collection, for Head-quarters Funds, of contributions from the various country corps. These are collected by eight collectors, who are constantly travelling about, visiting six corps in a week, and taking all the money collected at the various services they hold, and transmitting it, less their expenses, to Head-quarters. By this arrangement, each corps contributes one day's collections a quarter to Head-quarters, and the total sum amounts to

eight thousand pounds a year. The various journeys of the different collectors are all arranged at the beginning of the quarter; notices are sent out to the various corps, notifying them of the approaching visit, and asking that no special appeal should be made for any local object in the fortnight preceding; and a second notice is sent just before the visit, as a reminder. The collector himself has to fill in a weekly return, which is forwarded to Head-Quarters, showing what corps he has visited, what services he has held, how many people have attended each, how much the collections have amounted to, and what his expenses have been.

The next source of income is the Auxiliary League. It may surprise the public in general that there should be a steady income from people who do not belong to the Salvation Army; but this is so, and these subscribers are known as the Auxiliary League. Members of this League are of two descriptions—the first paying an annual subscription of one guinea; the second taking collecting-cards, and agreeing to collect not less than half-a-guinea a quarter. All receipts for other donations are sent out from this office; and the care of special appeals is also entrusted to it. The name and address of every person who has ever contributed anything at all are here preserved, and it is to be supposed that, like most other institutions, the Salvation Army, if successful with anybody once, does not forget to come again. There is one more fund which this office controls, and that is the Sick and Wounded Fund, for assisting and making grants to officers who may be temporarily incapacitated from duty. This fund is raised by a levy of a halfpenny a quarter from every member; but, of course, it has to be helped and increased from general funds.

The only other department of importance here is the Accountant's Department, about which we have heard a good deal lately, but which seems to be supervised and carried on in a most business-like way. Here, of course, all the book-keeping is done, and from here that most important item—the balance-sheet—is issued. The department is under the control of a firm of accountants.

After this office there are the Cashier's Offices and the Post Office, which are carried on in the same way as at the Home Office.

There is one other set of offices which

come under the heading of Head-quarters—the International Trade Head-quarters, in Clerkenwell Road, where all the printing and publishing connected with the Army and various other businesses are carried on. The printing and publishing offices are naturally like any others, but it may be interesting to know that, of the Salvation Army publications, the "War Cry" has a circulation of three hundred thousand, and "The Young Soldier" of one hundred and fifty thousand a week, while "All the World" has reached forty-six thousand, and "The Deliverer" forty-five thousand a month.

Beginning at the top of the building, the fifth floor is devoted to the Composing Room and Foundry. On the fourth floor, the first room we come across is the Tailoring Room. Here such uniforms as are "bespoke" are made, the vast majority being made by a country firm. Next we come to a room devoted to the manufacture and repair of musical instruments. They don't make all those used by the Army here, so we will give them the benefit of the doubt, and say that all those we hear about the streets which are cracked are manufactured elsewhere. The Tea-packing Room comes next. The Army once went in for general trade, but it did not pay, so was given up; but somehow tea remained, and they get through about three thousand pounds a week. The rest of this floor is given up to a dining-room for the hands, one part being a vegetarian restaurant, the other for the use of those hands who bring their own food.

Descending to the third floor we come across all the Editorial Rooms. Women's rights seem to be admitted by the Salvation Army, for almost all connected with the editorial work are of the weaker sex. The Dress-making comes next, where all dresses for the women are made, except for those who like to buy the material and make it up themselves. The rest of this floor is given up to a general store-room.

The second floor is given up to general offices. Here are the Commissioner's and the Secretary's Offices; the Stationery Office, whence all stationery is issued; the Order Department, through which all orders pass from the cashier, and where they are entered in books, which books are passed on to the various departments they may concern; and finally the Cashier's and Accountant's Offices.

The first floor contains the Book Warehouse, and one of the principal articles

sold here is music—one side of the room being stored with sheets of music. Next we have the Tailoring Department, where the Salvationist who disdains ready-made clothing can be measured, and have his clothes made to fit his manly form to his liking; and here we have the Sales Room—the Salvation Army Shop—where you may buy a pound of tea or a poke bonnet. They sold seventeen thousand bonnets last year. The last department on this floor is the Colour Designers' Office, and uncommonly good designs they can turn out here.

The ground floor contains the Publishing Offices, Packing Rooms, Outfit-packing Rooms, Unprinted Paper Rooms, and Post Office, through which about one thousand letters pass each way every day. In the basement, of course, they have the printing machines. In all there are about two hundred, and sixty people employed, of whom about three-quarters are Salvationists.

Having reached the basement of the International Trade Head-quarters, we have finished our journeyings over the Salvation Head-quarters. It is most certainly an immense business, and perfectly arranged. All seem to have plenty to do, and do it right cheerfully, as if they liked it; and one comes away with a feeling that, whether it be right or wrong in its teaching and its peculiar methods, the Salvation Army has the power to make men and women work—work hard, and with smiling faces.

A BOULEVARD THEATRE.

THE PORTE SAINT-MARTIN.

MY recollections of this theatre—not the present building bearing the same name, but its predecessor—date from 1843, an epoch, from an artistic point of view, at least as brilliant as any in its history. And this is saying a great deal, for in previous years a host of celebrities—all deservedly favourites with the public—had successively appeared on its boards: the charming Jenny Vertpré, in "La Pie Voleuse," a piece which, under the title of the "Maid and the Magpie," subsequently gave Fanny Kelly an opportunity of displaying her hitherto unsuspected dramatic capabilities; Philippe, in the "Vampire"; Potier, in the "Petites Danaïdes"; and, above all, Mademoiselle Georges in "La Tour de Neale."

Most of these achieved their greatest triumphs between 1830 and 1840, under the management of Harel, a very singular personage, whose eccentricities were a never-failing source of amusement to the members of his company. This clever, but reckless and improvident man, had been by turns editor of a newspaper, préfet—during the "Hundred Days"—banished at the Restoration, then manager of the Odéon, and finally, in 1830, he assumed the reins of government at the Porte Saint-Martin. During the ten years which elapsed between the commencement and the close of his managerial career, in spite of the production of some of the best dramas of the répertoire, and notwithstanding the engagements of Frédéric Lemaître, Madame Dorval, and Bocage, he was constantly beset with difficulties of every kind, all of which he met with perfect gaiety and good humour, invariably taking for his maxim, "contre fortune bon cœur."

It naturally resulted that his financial embarrassments grew worse and worse; not only were his creditors unpaid, but his actors also; hardly a day elapsing without his inventive powers being taxed to answer some fresh claim on his purse. Once, Rancourt, in after years the Maître d'Ecole of the "Mystères de Paris," to whom long arrears were owing, came to him with a very serious face.

"My good friend," said he, "I have not dined to-day."

"My dear fellow," replied Harel, "you will sup all the better."

"But," objected the actor, "in order to do that I must have money."

"What! have you none?"

"Not a sou."

"It is your own fault. Go to the treasury. I have given directions that you should be paid."

Away went Rancourt to the treasurer and handed in his account, the sum total of which amounted to five hundred and fifty francs. The cashier gravely counted out twenty francs and offered them to him, saying that he was unable to give him more. Rancourt indignantly rushed back, in hopes of finding the manager; but did not meet him until the following day.

"Monsieur Harel," he said, "you have been making a fool of me. According to your directions, I went to the treasury, and was offered twenty francs!"

"And you didn't take them?"

"Take them! Of course not."

"You were wrong, mon cher, very wrong. I can't offer you as much to-day."

At last, after a long and persevering struggle, Harel was compelled to resign his post, and, in hopes of bettering his fortune, started on a professional tour through Russia and Turkey with Mademoiselle Georges, and other members of his company, from which he returned penniless, and died in 1846.

In 1840, the management of the Porte Saint-Martin was undertaken by the dramatist, Théodore Cogniard, and the first piece I saw there was "Trente Ans de la Vie d'un Joueur"—popular at one time in London as "Thirty Years of a Gambler's Life"—admirably played by Frédéric Lemaître and Madame Dorval. These two great artists, although no longer young, were still in full possession of their unrivalled powers; and to see them both in the same drama was a treat not easily to be forgotten.

Frédéric—his surname was by common consent habitually dropped—was in the strictest sense of the word an original actor, naturally endowed with a rare creative genius, which he used or misused according to the fancy of the moment; now exciting his audience to enthusiasm by some brilliant flash of inspiration; now jarring their sensibilities by a sudden lapse into triviality of gesture and tone. So that, as G. H. Lewes justly remarks in his excellent work "On Actors and the Art of Acting":

"In his great moments he was great, but he was seldom admirable throughout an entire scene, and never throughout an entire play." It must, however, be acknowledged that his good qualities far outbalanced his defects; every part "created" by him—and in his case the phrase is not a misnomer—bore "a specific stamp of individuality"; he imitated no one, and was successfully imitated by none. Were I to select the pieces in which he most impressed me, I should mention the two concluding acts—he was too old for the earlier ones—of "Trente Ans," "Don César de Bazan," "La Dame de Saint Tropez," and, of course, "Robert Macaire." As Buridan, in the "Tour de Nesle," he was undignified, and altogether inferior to Bocage; whereas, in the parts above cited, "none but himself his parallel could be."

Shortly after Frédéric's death, one of the many journalists employed on the

Paris papers, anxious to contribute his quota of gossip to the general stock, bethought himself of consulting an old dramatist, a friend of the deceased actor, from whom, as it turned out, he succeeded in gleanings about as much information as that obtained by Johnson with respect to Dryden from Colley Cibber.

"You knew Frédéric well?" began the questioner, after propitiating the other by the offer of a nondescript "weed" fabricated at Gros-Caillon.

"Intimately," was the reply; "a good sort of fellow on the whole, but too impulsive, much too impulsive."

"In what way?"

"In every way. I will give you an example. About a month before he died, we dined together at the Banquet d'Anacréon, just opposite the Porte Saint-Martin, and what do you think he did?"

"Tell me," said the journalist, anticipating some curious disclosure.

"Well," resumed his informant, in a pathetically impressive tone, "he emptied the entire cruet of vinegar into the salad, and spoiled it!"

The old saying, "A rolling stone gathers no moss," might have been correctly applied to Madame Dorval, for she never remained long in any theatre, and up to the close of her career was perpetually in embarrassed circumstances, while other actresses with not a tittle of her talent—I might almost say genius—were busily making their "pile." These only too frequent financial collapses may partly be attributed to her habitual carelessness in money matters, and partly to her generous and confiding disposition, always prompt to respond to the appeals—whether genuine or not—of her poorer colleagues, and never so happy as when relieving the wants of others at the expense of her own. As a natural consequence, notwithstanding the large salaries from time to time received by her, the latter years of her life, chiefly passed in provincial wanderings, were one continued struggle against poverty; and long before her death, in June, 1849, the very name of the great artist, whose creations of Adèle d'Harvey, Kitty Bell, and Marie Jeanne were once household words, had been well-nigh forgotten.

Marie Dorval was unquestionably the best dramatic actress I ever saw; with no pretension to refined elegance of manner or to studied purity of diction, she was occasionally coarse, but more often sublime.

A true creature of impulse, endowed with an inexhaustible fund of energy and tenderness, she could make her audience by turns quail before her, and by some exquisite touch of pathos melt them to tears. Of all her personations, Marie Jeanne was perhaps the most effective. It was not acting, but stern and terrible reality, and nothing within my recollection has surpassed it.

The last of the famous trio, my old and valued friend Bocage, made his mark at this theatre by his admirable creations of Buridan in the "Tour de Neale," and Antony, in the extraordinary drama of that name. I have before me, while I write, a life-like drawing of him in the latter part, by the clever and lamented artist, Alexandre Lacauchie; tall, thin, and pale, an ideal representative of Dumas's sentimentally "fatalist" hero. Like Madame Dorval, he was essentially an actor of drama, thoroughly unconventional, and, as John Kemble remarked of Kean, "terribly in earnest." His interpretation of "Tartuffe," during his short stay at the Théâtre Français, has been described as "saturnine and sensual, forcible and true," and I regret not to have seen him play it. His dislike, however, to be fettered by traditional rules soon caused his withdrawal from the "house of Molière," where he was in every sense of the word out of place. In 1846 he became manager of the Odéon, and produced there an old tragedy of Rotrou, "Le Martyre de Saint-Genest," he himself undertaking the title-part. Being extremely short-sighted, he constantly wore an eye-glass, which, dangling from a black ribbon, presented a somewhat incongruous effect, and was immediately "spotted" by the caricaturists of the day. Bocage died shortly after the proclamation of the Empire, having previously, being a staunch Republican, voluntarily abdicated his managerial post.

Once, and once only at this theatre, I saw Mademoiselle Georges as the Marquise de Brinvilliers in "La Chambre Ardente." She had become enormously stout, and moved about with difficulty; but her voice was still marvellously clear and penetrating, and, looking at her finely-shaped head and majestic bearing, it was easy to imagine what she must have been in the early days of the century, when contesting with Mademoiselle Duchesnois the palm of supremacy, and subjugating even the partisans of her rival by the irresistible magic of her beauty.

Besides these "chefs de file," the Porte Saint-Martin was rich in excellent artists, a few of whom deserve especial mention. Clarence, a talented and sympathetic "jeune premier"; Jemma, the Chourineur of the "Mystères de Paris"; Mademoiselle Clarisse Miroy, in her youth the heroine of "La Grâce de Dieu," but at the period I speak of, a buxom and vivacious dame of some forty-five summers; and the extremely pretty Mademoiselle Andréa. These were subsequently reinforced by Fechter, Dumaine, Madame Marie Laurent—the "Jack Sheppard" of the Boulevard stage—and the very attractive Madame Rey, an unrehearsed "effect" in whose dramatic career I remember witnessing. She was playing Madame Bonacieux in "La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires," and towards the end of the piece, in the scene where she was in the act of raising to her lips the cup into which Milady had just poured the poison, a voice from the gallery suddenly exclaimed: "Don't drink it, madame, c'est de la mort aux rats! I saw that horrible woman put it in." This "naïveté," as might be expected, set the whole house in a roar; the "horrible woman"—Madame Person—literally shook with suppressed merriment, while poor Madame Rey, hiding her face in her handkerchief to conceal her laughter, was for some minutes unable to recover herself sufficiently to drain the fatal draught, and prepare to breathe her last in the arms of D'Artagnan.

I am afraid even to hazard a guess as to the number of performances—revivals included—attained up to date by that stupendous fairy spectacle, the "Biche au Bois," which, as far as popularity is concerned, has equalled, if not surpassed, the celebrated "Pied de Mouton." Barring two exquisite specimens of scene-painting, the "Castle of Steel," and the "Forest of Sycamores," it appeared to me to differ in no essential respect from the ordinary run of show-pieces; in a word, to be as plotless and tedious as a modern English pantomime.

I have a painful recollection of having sat it out, on its first production, from seven p.m. to one a.m., and have no hesitation in declaring, that if "Billy" Dunn, the eccentric stage-manager of Drury Lane, had been alive to undergo a similar infliction, he would have been more than justified in pronouncing his invariable verdict:

"Wants cutting!"

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER VII.

BEATRIX sat alone in the shady room in the hotel at Bigorre, in the Pyrenees. The room was fairly cool, and full of the scent of sweet flowers; outside, beyond the shadow of the awning, the sun blazed and burned, the brilliant flowers flared, the grass baked on the hot, hard earth. Down in the valley the goat-bells tinkled; from the hidden town the convent bells chimed; voices came softly and fitfully on the gentle wind. A girl passed, singing, out of sight. Before her the great serrated bastions of the Pyrenees lifted their white crowns against the cloudless blue of the burning sky.

Her whole heart and soul were full of the beauty, the majesty, the peace of it. The happiness brimmed over from her swelling heart and flooded the vast world spread out before her. It seemed to her as if her joy had made the sunshine; a joy so great that no city could have contained it, so she must needs have brought it up to these lonely heights. No woman was ever so happy; no woman had ever won such a husband. She thought with wondering pity of all the women left in the world who must get along somehow in life without Everard. There seemed almost a cruelty, an injustice in it, that, through no fault of theirs, their lives should be left so blank, wasted so utterly—that she should have absorbed all that was worth having in life. She wondered if they could possibly hope to be satisfied with life. She had heard often of the sorrow and disappointment which are in store for all—the loneliness and sadness of those who wake up after love's young dream, and find it a vanished illusion. She could quite believe that now: what could life be but loneliness and disappointment for all those other women?

She had been married a fortnight—a fortnight so full of happiness, which was ever varied, ever new, that it seemed like months. Not the smallest, thinnest cloud had crossed the boundless sunshine, which had been like the sunshine blazing over the world outside. Far away, thunder-clouds might be gathering, but they were still below her horizon, and she thought as

little of them as she thought of the next mountain thunder-storm, while the sky above was high and cloudless, and the air around fresh and sweet. She knew her step-daughter would be angry, but it was impossible to realise, or even to think of her anger in this serene atmosphere of love and content, far away from the world of discord. There had been no letter from her in answer to her father's communication. They could not be offended at this neglect, it was so perfectly natural. Sir Everard had only alluded once or twice to her silence with an indulgent laugh.

"It would be a blow to her, poor girl; but she is wise not to put her thoughts on paper until she has cooled down and got over the shock, so that she can see things in their true light. Such a letter as I should have expected her to write, on the spur of the moment, would only have given fuel to the flame; it would not have been a relief to her. She is wise, and she shows how true her affection is for me by keeping silence till she can speak without giving me pain."

Letters of any sort had reached them scantily and irregularly, for they had been roaming about the lonely Pyrenean heights and gorges at their own sweet will. To-day a budget of letters had been brought, but there was not a letter from Helena amongst them. For herself there were four; three business letters, which she read and tore up impatiently—what desecration to remind her of business in this fairy world! The other was from a Wellingby lady who had alternately dropped and patronised Miss Lyon, and on the strength of such acquaintance, wrote to congratulate Lady Treverton in the tone of a dearest, closest friend, and to trust that she and Sir Everard would spare a few days from their honeymoon travels to visit Acacia Lodge, Wellingby.

"Such is life," laughed Beatrix. "She had not a spare corner to offer me when Dr. Vaughan suggested that I should go there during the dismantling of our house."

Sir Everard's letters lay on the table. He had gone out to arrange about some expedition for next day. There were nineteen letters for him. His wife turned them over with a delicious, still-new sense of her perfect right to do so. "All business," she settled; and dismissing them as unworthy of consideration, she returned to her dreamy contemplation of the sunny world.

Then a sound made her heart beat fast,

and her face light. If, after a fortnight of matrimony, a bride's heart has ceased to beat at her husband's footstep, it must be because a long engagement has exhausted such heart-beats. Beatrix had not even known her husband for the length of the shortest ordinary engagement. She shut her eyes and pretended that she was asleep. It was good for him that he should have such little temporary disappointments, and she loved to feel him stoop over her, and kiss her on the eyelids, and then to wake straight to meet his passionate blue eyes close to hers.

But it happened that Sir Everard, though quite as deeply in love, was in the first place a man whose love we are told is "as a thing apart," and not as a woman's, his "whole existence"; also, he was forty-seven, and not twenty, and he had been in love before. There was room in his mind for some fragment of interest in his home affairs, and having heard outside that the letters had come, he hurried in to get them with a zest born of long abstinence from home news. His wife was asleep, he thought—tired, no doubt, after their morning mountain walk. He did not think of waking her, but took up his letters, ran a glance over them all, and picking out one from his country solicitors, Messrs. Clay and Hay, of Monkchester, opened and read it.

Beatrix lay back in her chair with her eyes shut. For the first time she was hurt and offended—that he should have preferred his stupid letters to her! And business letters, too! She heard him tear open the envelope and unfold the paper. She would not disturb him—she would go on with her sham slumber. By-and-by, when it pleased his high-mightiness, he would come to wake her, and she would pretend to wake up cross, annoyed at seeing him, showing him that she preferred her sleep to his society. . . . How still the room was! How still the garden, and the valley, and the hills beyond! The insects buzzed loud in the sunshine; the leaves of the orange-trees rustled softly to the faint whisper of the wind. What a long time he was over that letter! She had not heard him turn the page. When would he turn it? How closely it must be written! She listened with intense interest, wondering when he would turn the page over. Then it grew to painful suspense. The summer-flies droned; down in the village somebody was playing a mandolin. . . . Why, she was almost asleep in real earnest, when she

woke up with a start, as if the mountain rock beneath her had been rent asunder. It was her husband tearing open another envelope.

"Awake, Trix!" he said, half absently. "What made you jump like that? Have you been dreaming?"

His voice sounded curiously cold. Chilled and frightened, she turned her face to him, saying:

"Is anything the matter?"

"Nothing; what should be?" he returned, evasively. "Go to sleep again; you are tired. You have been sleeping in an uncomfortable position, which made you dream. See, the sun has gone round the corner, and it grows chilly. You must have a rug."

He took one from the sofa, and a cushion, folding the rug carefully over her and putting the cushion behind her head; all with the deep tenderness to which she was accustomed; and yet there was something new in it which she could not define, only vaguely feel. It made her feel suddenly sad and ready to cry; yet there was nothing wanting in it. He seemed even more tender than ever, more anxiously protective. Perhaps it was remorse for her impatience and for her innocent deception; perhaps she had really caught a little sudden chill, for her eyes filled with tears, and a sob rose to her throat, and she caught his hand from her neck, where he was smoothing the soft woollen coverette, and kissed it passionately.

"My darling, you have overtired yourself," he said, uneasily. "Have you been feeling dull?"

"Yes. Don't go on reading those tiresome letters."

"I must just glance at this one. It is from Larrock and Key, my London solicitors."

"Then it will keep. Hush! There is the Angelus ringing from the Carmelite Convent. How the bells answer each other from hill to hill, like the angels in Isaiah's vision! How solemn, how still it is—"

"Deep is the silence, as of summer noon,
When a soft shower shall trickle soon."

"It won't be a very soft one," said Sir Everard, drawn away from his mail-brought cares by her gentle persistence and the influence of the solemn noontide hush. "There will be thunder presently."

He knelt on the ground beside her, holding her hand. They watched and

listened silently: her eyes upon the distant dazzling peaks, his upon her face.

A moment ago his soul had been filled with storm and fury; now calm had come, and light with it. A moment ago the sweetness and peace seemed to have been driven out of his life, giving place, not to despair, not even to suspicion, but to maddening rage that such news should have come to mar the beauty of his happiness. The miserable, drivelling pettifoggers! How had they dared to hint such things; how had they dared to repeat to him what they had been vile enough to hear? "Thought it their duty to make him aware," indeed! Aware of what!—of the chattering of magpies and carrion-crows? "That there were unpleasant rumours about; all, of course, foolish, if not wicked; but since they were inconsistent with the respect due to himself and Lady Treverton, he would probably see well to contradict them, if he did not think them of sufficient importance to institute an action for libel."

"The rogues! They were affronted at not having their fingers in the marriage-settlement pie," he thought. "Now they write, partly out of revenge on me, and partly, no doubt, in hope that they may goad me into bringing a libel action."

He looked down at his wife's expressive face, at her deep, true eyes. That he trusted her fully, utterly, unassailably, was not to be wondered at; but what glamour was over the eyes of the rest of the world, that they should not see her as he saw her!

His eyes drew hers from the landscape up to his. She sighed a long, happy sigh.

"A penny for your thoughts, my sweet," he said. "Are you growing homesick? Was that sigh for England, home, and beauty? What news have you had by post?"

"Only a letter from a Wellingby acquaintance, whom I hardly knew," she said, as he picked up the envelope, with its big monogram and "Acacia Lodge" on the flap.

"She writes tremendously long letters for a mere acquaintance," said Sir Everard, glancing at the torn fragments of newspaper on the floor beside her chair.

Beatrix flushed scarlet, then said, with hurried evasiveness:

"She writes a large, sprawling hand, does she not? She is a pushing, insincere sort of woman. What have you arranged about going to Tarbes?"

He would not for one moment have harboured the least particle of disloyal thought; his was the fierce faith that would accept anything in defiance of sense and reason. So he studiously averted his eyes from the floor, that a fancy which had struck him might not be encouraged—a fancy that though the envelope was addressed in a bold, running hand, with many tails and dashes, a scrap of paper had audaciously turned up to him a lying face; a face written closely over with small, close, regular writing; the hand of a man, he could almost have sworn.

They discussed the expedition to Tarbes with a great deal of question, and detail, and surmise, but very little attention. It took all his mind to help thinking of that scrap of paper. The strain was becoming awful. He was beginning to think he had seen the words written upon it. Were they affectionate words, such as no man should dare write to his wife? Could he not see them now, written black, clear, regular, upon the white awning that screened the window? "Dear," "Dearest," "My love"—were not those the words? He began to suffer torments.

"Are you not well, dear?" asked Beatrix, in tender anxiety, as she looked up at his whitening face.

"Has miladi letters for the post? The facteur will call in half an hour."

The interruption broke the strain, and dispelled the bad dream. In turning his eyes from the garden to the servant, he saw the haunting scrap of paper. He was right as to the shape, and the close, black writing, but he could not possibly have made out a word. The "dear" and "dearest" were only written on the retina of his imagination. The other scraps were farther out of sight, covered, or turned blank side up.

With a laugh of relief, he said to Beatrix:

"I declare I had forgotten the letters. I must look over them, love, if you don't mind. Some may require an answer at once. They have already been delayed, following us about."

He gathered them up unread, and carried them away. He dared not read more in his wife's presence, lest she should guess their possible contents. She did not notice his action, except with relief.

"The tiresome thing," she exclaimed, stooping to pick up the fragments of her own letters, as soon as he was gone. "I must tell him some time about my literary

work; but there is no need to talk of business here; it is past and done."

"Have I left my cigar-case here, Trix?" asked her husband, returning.

There she was, down upon the floor, carefully picking up the bits of paper. It was only tidiness, of course; but surely there was some receptacle for waste paper to be found, and she need not have crammed them all into her pocket so hastily. Stooping, too, makes the face red; but why should she look as if she had been detected in a felony?

"Pshaw! that fellow's impertinence has set my reason astray," he told himself, and he took up his cigar-case and went out. "I am worse than Othello."

Nevertheless, he sought out the Gray's Inn solicitors' letter next, and with a cold fear that made his fingers tremble. What if they, too, talked of rumours? He must needs attend when they spoke—they, whose forefathers had acted for his forefathers, who held his honour and interest close to heart, who never spoke without grave cause.

In the relief that followed his glance along the letter, he hardly took in the sense of it; all he understood was that they alluded to no "rumours," so here was proof that there were no rumours beyond the "rustic cackle of the bourg" of Monkchester. But there was still something strange and unexpected. He must read it again.

Messrs. Larrock and Key wrote to him at the request of his daughter, Miss Helena Augusta Treverton, praying that he would at once settle so much money upon her as would maintain her separately, and according to her position, until her marriage with Lord Monkchester. Miss Treverton had determined on living from henceforth apart from her father, and however regrettable this determination might be, she was of age, and free to choose. They trusted Sir Everard would act kindly and generously by her, as the young lady was very resolute, and absolutely determined on not residing under her father's roof under present circumstances.

"Poor Lena," thought her father, with an indulgent smile. "Well, it might have been unpleasant for us all. One can hardly blame her. It is only for a week or two, of course, and then she will be off to Chimborazo. Why can't she stay on with the Carlauries? I suppose Carlaurie will see that all is right. Thank Heaven, there is no question of my giving

her away, since the wedding will be on the other side of the globe, and so we need not hurry home."

Then he read the last paragraph of the letter:

"We are also requested to inform you, as it bears upon the matter of sufficient income, that Miss Treverton's marriage with Lord Monkchester is indefinitely postponed."

"The villain!" cried the outraged British father. "Has he dared? It was indefinite before. He can hardly have had time to write from Chimborazo. Let me see. He sailed on the day we were engaged—five weeks ago. Letters take thirty-three days to come. Unless he wrote to put off the wedding from the middle of the Atlantic—which is hardly likely—it cannot be his doing. He may have telegraphed immediately on his arrival; there has been time for that. Some fighting may be going on, making the place unpleasant for a lady. Helena is a great deal more unlikely to have put it off than he. The sooner the better for her, under the circumstances, poor girl. 'Under present circumstances,' Key said, as if they could be altered." He laughed a laugh of confident triumph; but broke short. "Why did Key say 'present'? Lawyers are careful what words they use. 'Present,' implies circumstances that are only temporary."

Again the vague uneasiness seized him. Was something brewing he did not know of? Why had Beatrix tried to hide her letters? Poor love, he had not thought of it! Perhaps she, too, had had hints of "rumours," and in love for him had hidden them from him—as he had hidden his news from her. He would go to her at once and find out; such a secret, such a fear shared would lose all its sting. "Letters!" He had none, he answered his servant, impatiently, who came to tell him time was up. Where was his mistress? Gone to vespers at the Carmelite Convent.

What in the world had taken her to the Carmelite Convent in the heat of the day, with thunder already rolling in the mountains, and without having told him of her intention? His mind was all disturbed. Though he had not a doubt of her, though he scoffed at the very idea of mystery, the air round him seemed full of doubts and mysteries, and all sorts of wild suggestions were whispering around him. Why had she gone to the Carmelites in this sudden way? A reasonless fear took possession

of him. Had something happened to part them—something of which she had been told in the torn-up letter? Was her silence to spare him, to leave herself free to escape, to put a barrier like death itself between them? He thought of Louise de la Vallière, how she fled to the Carmelites from her Royal lover when conscience woke within her. He could not even reason, much less examine the exactness of his historical parallel—he could only rush after his truant wife.

The rain was already falling, the sky was dark, and the thunder rolling overhead; but he hurried to the chapel unconscious of it all. The door was not bolted and barred, like the door of La Vallière's convent—there was only the heavy curtain to push aside.

He could not see her at first, for the chapel was nearly dark; the painted windows were so small, and the thunder-cloud had put out the daylight. The tapers twinkled on the High Altar; the sanctuary lamp burned red in the gloom; here and there, under deep arches, lights glimmered at side altars. The monks' voices rose and fell in sweet, monotonous rhythm. The air was heavy with incense, for they had just ended the Magnificat. He fancied he saw his wife [lying] full-length on the sanctuary floor, in the darkness, covered with a black pall. He was not up in Catholic ritual and practice, and he believed she had only to rush to a convent door to be put under a pall and locked up at once and for evermore; he forgot all about the theological barriers to be surmounted. He was peering into the gloom, trying to make out that imaginary outline, when a rustle in the darkness, quite close by, caused him to look round, and he saw her just sitting down, and slowly beginning to fan herself with her great red fan. He went up to her, and whispered:

"My darling, I thought I had lost you!"

She looked astonished and rather frightened at the passionate thankfulness in his voice and eyes. Then she smiled, and whispered:

"How should you lose me? I was lonely, and the house was unbearably close, and it seemed cooler outside; and the bell rang, and so I came. It is so quiet and cool in here. I am glad you came, for we shall have to wait till the storm is over, and I should have been frightened alone."

They sat together in the fragrant dark, the holy silence. The monks were gone, the tall tapers were put out, but the lamps at the altars shone steadily on. The small peasant congregation had gone, too. The thunder crashed, the lightning flashed, the rain splashed over them; war and turmoil outside, peace within. He thought as he sat there, with her so close beside him, that this was the sweetest hour he had known yet. He had never loved her so much as now, when he had just realised what it would be to lose her.

The storm cleared, and they went out into the sunshine again—into a world cool and clear from its plenteous bath. The birds were singing lustily; the peasants, in their red and blue caps, appeared from under archways and out of doorways, and went on their way with their mules and goats.

Sir Everard felt that he had gone through a great experience; that he had been shown, in a terrible vision—a Brocken night, or a Dantesque glimpse of hell—what punishments were in store for the jealous and suspicious. But he said, gravely:

"You must not play me such a trick again, love, in this outlandish region of brigands to kidnap, and precipices to fall over. You must always tell me where you are going. There must be no secrets and mysteries between us, now and evermore, or life will be misery."

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III. A NEW FRIEND.

I WONDER if at any period of my life I shall be able to look back upon that awful time without a shudder of horror! I had read of shipwrecks, and perils, and adventures, and enjoyed the excitement of so doing. Reality was a very different thing.

We suffered cold, hunger, thirst, and the hourly dread of death, as our frail boat tossed helplessly amidst the heavy seas that threatened to overwhelm it; and days and nights passed on, and our scanty stock of provisions was fast drawing to an end, before rescue came.

We were then picked up by a vessel bound for New Guinea; and there I landed, penniless and friendless, to begin life again as best I could. My papers and letters of introduction to the people in Canada were all lost. I knew that I could write to Mrs. Dunleith and tell her of my misfortunes, but I felt no inclination to do so; I did not wish to ask or receive a favour at her hands.

Through the kindness of the Captain whose ship had rescued us, I and my fellows in misfortune were lodged with some people in the town; but, kind and hospitable as they were, I knew that the accommodation could only be temporary.

I took counsel with Hnel Penryth, between whom and myself a sort of friendship had sprung up. I cannot honestly say that in my heart I liked him; there

was something so hard and cynical about the man, and yet I knew that he was brave and enduring, and kind-hearted; our joint misfortunes and sufferings had proved that. He seemed to like me, and thrown together as we were, it was only natural that I should explain my situation to him.

He listened in silence, his strange, cold eyes fixed on my face, as if reading there what my lips might not choose to reveal.

"Your friend is a woman!" he said, quietly, when I had finished.

I coloured slightly, and nodded.

"Perhaps you are wise in not renewing your obligations," he went on. "The question is, do you wish her to know that you have been saved from shipwreck, or remain under the impression that you were drowned?"

"It matters very little to me what she, or any one else, believes," I said, bitterly. "My life or death concerns no one."

"In that case," he said, "throw in your fortune with me; you are young, you have no ties, you should be adventurous. As for me, the world is all the same, and one country as good as another; with hands to work and brains to guide, a man should never be helpless. Gold, glory, pleasure—they are prizes to be won on the field of enterprise. Of the first I have enough and to spare for both of us; you shall accept as a loan what I do not even need or value. Let us go to the New World, there one's energies are not cramped, one's actions paralysed by an effete civilisation, or the tyranny of social distinctions; there man is man—his own value, what he chooses to make it—the current of thought a pure and undisturbed stream, not a turbulent river, swollen by the affluents of chicanery, rivalry, finance, and self-aggrandisement. Say, will you throw in your lot with mine?"

I have long desired a companion—young, free, enterprising; you possess these attributes. On my side, I offer you the half of a fortune I do not need, the results of an experience you yourself lack, and a companionship and fidelity that need no bond but their own promise."

He held out his hand; his strange eyes had a warm and kindly light; his face had lost much of its hard and bitter cynicism.

I took the proffered hand; I was indeed deeply moved by his words, and his evident sincerity.

"So be it," I said, heartily. "For the fortune you offer, I accept just as much as bare necessity demands, until I can repay the loan. For the rest——"

"Let the future prove its worth," he said, gravely; "I ask no more. It is settled."

I cannot set down in detail the events of the year that followed. It was adventurous, wild, hazardous, exhilarating beyond that given to most men of this nineteenth century to experience. My strange friend was one of the most gifted and intelligent beings it has ever been my lot to know. Brilliant, daring, with physical strength that seemed to defy hardship, and a sublime audacity that was absolutely devoid of fear, never was man more fitted for the life of peril and excitement which was ours. My roving tastes were gratified to their fullest extent, and I learnt to dispense with many of the false and foolish habits and desires which civilization has named "necessities."

I learnt to know how few and small are really those so-called necessities. How bountiful is Nature to the seeker and student of her lore, and how poor our wisdom often looks beside her mysteries—stored up and held close to her silent breast from the world's infancy! In what blindfold, blundering fashion we most of us go through life—deaf and heedless to all that does not materially concern our individual interests and petty ambitions!

I was greatly puzzled by my friend's nationality, and he for long was extremely reticent on the point. He spoke several languages, and all fluently and with ease. He had, from his own account, travelled a great deal, studied deeply, read and thought more than many men double his age, and yet, with all that expenditure of thought and study, had never adopted any profession, or settled down into any given groove.

I think his intellect was of the militant order, and that he made more foes than friends by the boldness of his opinions, and the absolute intolerance he had for all deception or pandering to prejudices. He was enamoured of progress, and the fields of research were to him an inexhaustible delight.

We had a turn at gold-mining in Australia for six months, and his knowledge and skill, added to his great physical strength, resulted in a venture so successful that I at least could have commanded independence for life. But the roving fever was in my veins now, and I felt no inclination to realise my fortune and settle down into the tame and mediocre respectability of a citizen's life.

Huel was a born democrat, yet it never seemed to me that he could have sprung from the people. He had no vicious tastes either, and possessed a nature too cold and critical to have ever succumbed to the influences or caprices of women. Indeed, his indifference to the sex amused me often, though I knew it was the outcome of a genuine feeling.

"They are only butterflies in the garden of life," he said to me when I argued with him that there might be some good, and virtue, and gentleness in the sex he so scathingly contemned. "Pretty enough, I grant, in the sunshine and flowers; but useless when sorrow, necessity, hardship, demand sympathy, or aid, or intelligence."

I thought then that some deeper motive than he chose to confess had made him adopt such opinions. He had suffered, and deeply, too, at the hands of one woman ere he could thus condemn and despise the whole sex. But I never attempted to force his confidence; I knew that if the mood or inclination ever took him I should hear the story of his life, and if I was at times curious respecting it, I knew better than to display the feeling.

I had soon discovered that Huel Penryth was a materialist, possessing absolutely no belief in the usually received creeds to which men pin their faith, and by which they establish their various forms of worship.

The boldness and frankness, as well as the cold, cruel truths of his unsparing logic, at first rather startled me, but he made no attempt to force his views and opinions on my mind, nor did he ever obtrude them unasked. Face to face with Nature as we were, it was no difficult matter to prove the simple, unerring

method of her proceedings in all matters, however small or insignificant.

CHAPTER IV. IN THE BUSH.

THE first burst of the Australian spring was to me a wonder and delight.

The pale tints, the chill air, the variable climate of my own native land were a good preparation for the splendour of colour, and the wealth of sunshine, and the almost oppressive fragrance of this New World. The air was laden with the scents of acacias and fruit-blossoms, and the rich, untrained luxuriance of flowers and creepers decked even the wildest spots with beauty.

We were staying, for a time, at one of the big sheep-runs on the Eura River. Huel had made the acquaintance of its owner, and accepted the frank offer of his hospitality with equal frankness.

To me the change was mightily pleasant, for I had had a rough time of it at the gold-fields. Our host was a Scotchman, Robert M'Kaye by name, who had come out to the colony when quite a young man, and now had amassed a large fortune, and married, and settled down there. He had two daughters, Jessie and Janet by name, very bright, pretty girls, and able to ride, shoot, and manage dairy and household, in a fashion which would have surprised some of their hothouse-nurtured sisterhood in the old country.

I was delighted with them and their life in general; they were frank, clever, companionable, without the slightest affectation of manner, and had managed to educate themselves surprisingly. They even had a piano, and I won their eternal gratitude by tuning and screwing it up into playable condition. In the evenings I would play, and sing the old Scotch airs and melodies, and dances for M'Kaye; and often have I seen the great tears roll down his rugged, sun-burnt face as the familiar words and airs brought back the memories of his own youth and his forgotten country.

"Once a Scot always a Scot," is very true. I think no people are so loyal in their attachment to their native land; so tenacious of upholding their nationality; so proud of their ancestry and descent! That spring-time in the log-house by the beautiful river was to me one of those resting-places in life which are like a landmark to look back upon in after years. Even Huel grew social and genial amidst

these kindly natures, and the freedom and unconventionality of our life with them. I never heard him scoff at the old Scotchman's habits and opinions, or the tenacity with which he clung to the simple forms of his religious faith. Perhaps the straightforward, honest nature of the man himself answered better than any argument as to the worth of that faith, and the reality of that religion.

One evening we were all sitting out in the verandah, the men smoking, the women working, and the conversation turned upon the old country. I had asked Mr. M'Kaye if he intended ever returning there.

"Well, I'll no say the thought has not been in my mind," he answered, with that due caution of speech so characteristic of his race. "But," he added, with a hurried glance at the two eager faces of the girls, "there's time enough yet."

"Father always says that," pouted pretty Jessie, the youngest of the daughters. "I'm sure we'd be glad to leave here and see Scotland. He's never tired of talking about it, and praising it, and yet he won't even promise to take us there. I'm sure he could well leave this place in the care of the head man, Robertson; he's as careful and conscientious as any one could be. We might run over to the old country for a year, and look up some of our kin. It's hard to know none of them."

"Where would be the advantage?" asked the old Scotchman, gruffly. "I've never found kinsfolk, nor friends either, willing to help one in misfortune, or give one a lift in the world. They're wary enough of approaching you so long as they think you might be asking anything of them. Of course, it's another matter when you're well-to-do and independent."

"Have you kept up any correspondence or acquaintance with your folk since you left Scotland?" asked Huel Penryth, carelessly.

"I'm not a good hand at letter-writing," said M'Kaye. "Once in a twelvemonth or thereabouts I get a letter—or write one. My own father and mother are dead long since—some uncles and aunts and cousins in Glasgow are my nearest relations. They do not trouble their heads about me. I have one friend who writes pretty regularly—we were at school together, but he stuck to the old country, being more favoured of fortune than I was. He was a land-owner, and has a fine place of his own in the Highlands. My folk were only plain Glasgow merchants. Might you know

anything of Scotland?" he asked, turning suddenly to Huel Penryth.

"No; I have never been there," he said. "I'm a Cornishman by birth, but I left my native place too young to remember much about it."

I glanced with some curiosity at my friend. It was the first time I had ever heard him voluntarily state anything about himself.

"Ah, they're a fine race," said M'Kaye, "and it's a fine country too, I've heard."

"It is very beautiful," said Huel, quietly and without enthusiasm; "but I've been a wanderer so long that I've no special attachment for any one place or part of the globe. I'm absolutely unpatriotic."

A barking of dogs sounded at this moment, and then the tramp of horses' hoofs and the now familiar "cooe."

The girls sprang up in wild excitement.

"The waggons," they exclaimed, "and not before they're wanted. Stores are running low."

We all rose and went out to where the heavy, lumbering vehicles were standing.

The bullocks were unyoked, boxes, barrels, sacks of flour, and parcels of all sorts were strewn over the ground, or carried off into the verandah to be opened, or stored away until needed.

The bullock-drivers were put up for the night, and we were returning to our chairs and pipes once more when a fresh commotion ensued.

This time it was the arrival of a strange-looking man on horseback, with three or four letter-bags strung round him.

"The mail! the mail!" cried the girls. "But how late you are to-night, Dermot," added Janet. "I suppose you won't object to a nobbler, or are you going to put up here?"

I heard a voice with a strong Irish accent informing her that the speaker was bound for another station further up the river, and after due refreshment and some ten minutes' rest and gossip he took himself off.

M'Kaye brought the mail-bag into the verandah and proceeded to open it. He handed the girls some newspapers and magazines. For himself there were two letters.

I leaned back in the low cane lounge, smoking, and watching the scene before me. A lazy, satisfied content was the only sensation I experienced. Everything was peaceful, restful, quiet. A soft, cool wind brought a delicious sense of coolness and

exhilaration. The full moon was shedding lustre over the dark trees and rippling water, the acacias and cactus gave forth a musky fragrance, an orange-tree laden with blossoms made the air heavy with perfume.

I watched the brilliant belt of stars in the clear dark blue of the sky. The lustre of the moonlight made a radiance strangely bright and clear. M'Kaye was able to read his letters with no artificial aid of lamp or candle.

Afterwards how all that scene came back to me! The restful calm, the scented air, the lights and shadows and perfumes, even the rustle of the paper as the girls cut the leaves, and their low laughter and exclamations as they turned over the illustrated pages.

An exclamation from the old Scotchman fell on my ear. I did not pay much attention to it. Presently he rose to his feet and folded the letters together and put them back in their envelopes.

"Good news I hope," I said, carelessly, as I glanced up at his tall, wiry figure.

"Oh yes," he answered, "I was only thinking it was somewhat odd I should have been speaking of the old place and the old friends to-night, and I've just had a letter from the Highland laird I mentioned—Campbell, his name is—Campbell of Corriemoor. He writes to say he's just been and got married. I thought he was a confirmed old bachelor. Well, well, there's no telling what folk may do."

I sat there quite still—my eyes fixed on the curling smoke wreaths.

"Campbell of Corriemoor?" I said, at last—my dry lips seeming to frame the words with difficulty. "I seem to know the name. Who has he married?"

"Quite a young lass, seemingly," said the old Scotchman. "A Miss Lindsay, who was staying on a visit with some Inverness folk. Well, I wish him well and happy—matrimony is always more or less of a venture—especially when a man is getting on in years a bit, and the Laird's far from young now."

I made no observation. What could I say? Had I not always expected it, imagined it; why should I care now? Voluntarily I had given her up, and exiled myself. Voluntarily thrown away her fresh, young love—her tender, truthful girl's heart. If she had learnt to console herself, and had accepted a worthier suitor, surely I could not blame her. Yet all the time I told myself this my heart was heavy within me, and something baser and more

selfish would whisper: "She might have waited—had she loved you she would have waited."

Now my dream was over for ever. She had settled her future for herself, and in all probability I had long ago faded from her memory, or only crossed it as a dark shadow, something she regretted and would be glad to forget.

A voice roused me at last. It was that of Huel Penryth. With a start I looked up. We were alone there in the verandah. The Scotchman and his two daughters had gone within. I had been too absorbed to notice their departure.

"I have spoken to you three times. What are you dreaming about?" asked Huel.

"A youthful folly," I answered somewhat bitterly.

"You knew this girl, then?" he said in those quiet, even tones of his.

I started.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"A deduction—that is all," he answered.

"I happened to catch sight of your face when M'Kaye was telling you about 'his friend's marriage. It was somewhat self-betraying; then you relapsed into gloomy thought—heeding nothing, hearing nothing. I guessed there was something in the background."

I was silent for a moment. I did not feel inclined for confidence. Huel smoked on, his eyes looking calmly and meditatively at the quiet beauty of the scene.

"It is a pity," he said, presently, "that we are all bound to go through some phase of folly at one period or another; but it is the case. I have had mine; you have had yours. There is always a time in a man's life when he is peculiarly susceptible to the influence of women. We act and react on one another, and give rise to the idea that we are absolutely necessary for mutual happiness. It is nonsense. Men have no need of women. Our minds can stand alone; women only have a softening and enervating influence upon us. We may strengthen them, and awaken reason and intelligence; they to us give little or nothing that is useful or stimulating."

"It is as well that no woman hears your heresies," I said, languidly.

I felt in no mood for discussion or analysis. What mattered it to me now whether women were good or bad, fair or false? That current of life which had set in their direction once warmly and freely, seemed to have grown chill and languid,

and now was flowing into other channels.

"You think," said Huel, in answer to my remark, "that if they heard me they would combat my prejudices? Believe me, the day has gone by for that. I am young in years; but by experience and suffering I could outnumber the lives of two ordinary men. I have learnt many hard truths; but the greatest truth is to learn to stand alone—to recognise Self as the law of life and the law of all progress. Beat down all in your path, care naught for your fellows, cease to entangle yourself with responsibilities around, about, below you, and you will win all you set yourself to win. However, we are drifting a long way from our starting-point. You have a sore heart to-night, my boy. Was this girl false to you? If so, be consoled that you learnt the truth early instead of late."

I shook my head.

"The fault was mine," I said. "I—I lost her. It is odd that now the loss is irrevocable I should feel its sting so keenly."

"The wound touches your self-love," he said, cynically. "No man likes to feel he is readily or easily supplanted, even in a thing so light and capricious as a woman's fancy."

I rose abruptly.

"You are wrong," I said. "I was never worthy one thought of hers—never; but all the same——"

My voice broke. I could not speak—I could not tell him that for one wild, maddening moment, heart, soul, my whole being, longed, with the fierce longing of hopelessness, to hold that little hand in mine once more, and hear that sweet, low voice say, "Douglas, I love you."

POSTAL WAIFS, WITHOUT RESERVE.

At a well-known corner, not far from Covent Garden, stands an auction mart, equally well known—as famous in its way, indeed, as Tattersall's for horses, or Christie's for art treasures. Late or early, we shall be pretty sure to find somebody in the gate of this really wonderful mart. On one side a board displays a catalogue of to-morrow's sale, on the other of to-day's; vans and carts are drawn up waiting for loads or delivering them, and a pretty constant

procession of busy-looking people files up and down the broad steps that lead within. Sometimes there is a special sale of jewellery, furs, silks, bric-à-brac, cigars, wines; but what goes on from day to day, with very little intermission, is an auction of the miscellaneous class of goods known as unredeemed pledges.

It is high noon in Covent Garden, the noon of a hazy, autumnal day. The litter of vegetable refuse from its morning market has been cleared away from the streets; the last costermonger's barrow has been wheeled away; the salesman has doffed his working garments and driven off to his sumptuous villa on the Thames, or to his club in Pall Mall, and only the ordinary trade in fruits, and flowers, and funeral wreaths, is going on in the Central Avenue. But for sales you are just in time. You may drop into Stevens's, and by good fortune come upon a fairy scene of the strangest, most wonderful, most lovely orchids, half wrapped in tissue-paper and cotton wool, but charming alike to sight and smell, with a musky, indefinite savour of tropical vegetation pervading the place, and the voice of the auctioneer, accentuated by the fall of the hammer, mingled, perhaps, with a little applause as some eager amateur has ventured a top price for some long-named variety of his favourite plant.

Not orchids, however, are the attraction to-day, but the establishment round the corner, where an announcement has caught the eye, coming towards the end of a long catalogue of unredeemed pledges, to the effect that the following lots, proceeding from the Returned Letter Department, will be sold without reserve by the order of the Postmaster-General, and here are articles in numeration so extensive, and in some cases of bulk also, that the mind is staggered by the assertion that they proceed from dead letters. Are you acquainted with people who slip inside the envelopes of letters they are directing to friends here and there, such articles as knitted jerseys, sets of underlinen, boxes of cigars, briarwood pipes, and such bulky articles? It calls to mind an interview held in the infancy of the Parcel Post with a leading official greatly interested in the success of that bantling.

"What will become of such parcels as are directed to persons who are not to be found at the addresses given?"

To which question the post office authority answered, unflinchingly:

"They will go to the Dead Letter Office."

That is the secret of the matter, no doubt. The Parcel Post is at the bottom of it all.

Another explanation is offered by a little old gentleman standing near, with an open catalogue in his hand, who, like the ancient mariner, lays a skinny hand on the sleeve of an intending guest:

"Mine friend," he says, "this is what shall have happenit. Many peoples go leave their little belongings at railway stations, at post offices, and different places, and they go away, perhaps, and get killed, or they kill one himself. And then the Government"—with a confident shake of the head, as much as to say, "just like those evil-minded Governments"—"he take everything and sell it for money. Once a year it is always the same."

He was a very knowing old gentleman, that, only in this case he was a little wide of the mark. Further enquiry confirms the earlier suggestion, that here is chiefly a question of waifs from the Parcel Post.

Following the procession of people who are hurrying in, we come to a spacious hall on the ground-floor, irregularly shaped, owing to the contour of the building and of the adjoining streets, but well lighted with high windows—that is, when there is light to be had from outside; but on a thick, hazy day like the present, there is everywhere a soft gloom, except on one side, where a timber and glass roof opens over a kind of arena, enclosed with counters, in the centre of which is a desk for the clerk, while all round are rows of eager faces belonging to a motley group of men and women two or three deep, the front rank sitting on low benches, and the others looking over their heads. In the corner, overlooking the arena, is the elevated rostrum of the auctioneer—an elaborate wooden structure of a florid rococo character, where, from what has the appearance of a bow-window on the first floor, the auctioneer sits and overlooks his audience. Where there are not people there is furniture of all kinds piled on the floor of the hall, and from its roof hang specimens of anything that is capable of being thus suspended—lamps of all kinds, gas-fittings, chandeliers, brilliant lustres of sparkling crystal, and the humble swing-lamp of the sempstress, cheek by jowl. The further part of the hall is chiefly occupied by railings, carrying long rows of pegs, upon which are hung specimens of

every kind of outer garment known to civilised life. Here are streets of overcoats, rows of entire suits, terraces of skirts and bodices, avenues of petticoats; great piles of sheets, huge rolls of blankets, immense bundles of undergarments, are piled here and there. Then there are counters round about loaded with portable property of a more costly kind—dressing-bags, work-boxes, field-glasses, gun-cases, pictures, books, electro-plate, dinner-services, costly china, down to workmen's tools, and horn-handled knives and steel forks, representing, in too many cases, the wrecks and fragments of broken-up homes, the relics of tragic fate, the spoils of the vanquished in the cruel battle of life!

The sale is already in full swing. Swing is the word, for with a swing a bundle of coats flies over the heads of the spectators, and is dexterously caught by the attendant within the enclosed arena, who makes a swift march round, while outstretched hands hastily pluck at the skirts or sleeves of the garments. "Six coats," cries the auctioneer while the lot is still in the air; "six, seven-and-six, eight." Bang goes the hammer, and the six coats are swung back from whence they came, while another lot whirls through the air, and is disposed of with equal expedition, only this time, perhaps, to the monotonous repetition of the bids is added the words, "selling at nine-and-six." Bang! and instead of hurtling back through the air the bundle is seized by a lady on the look-out for it, who pushes it into a bag between her feet without further ceremony. "Money in front," the auctioneer has called, and the buxom dame produces a bounteous-looking purse and deals out a number of half-crowns, which the clerk sweeps into his till, and he is ready for the next lot, which has already been knocked down, perhaps to Jones or Brown, who is a big dealer, with carts and horses at command. But the business goes at a tremendous pace—say at the rate of a hundred lots an hour, which gives just thirty-six seconds for each lot. As might be expected, the pawnbroker puts a reserved price on everything, and if this price is not reached the lot goes back. But if you want a bargain you must look sharp about it, for with the slightest hesitation in opening your mouth, behold the chance is gone!

While the sale of clothes is going on, it is the wardrobe dealers chiefly who are interested, many of whom are buying for

foreign and colonial markets, for there is a kind of cachet about pawnbrokers' goods, which are of a quality far superior to those found in Rag Fair or Petticoat Lane. There are more women than men at the business probably; plain, comfortable, well-rounded women, the humbler of whom, in black shawls, warm skirts, and bonnets of no particular shape or hue, are common objects at area doors, and often confidential friends of the female servants; while the higher class, in handsome silk mantles well covered with shining black beads, may be acquainted with the tire-women of duchesses.

There are others, too, of scarcely definable occupations, who watch with keen eyes the progress of the sale. There is Mrs. Blimmer, for instance, a pleasant-looking buxom woman, who has neither shop nor store, nor any ostensible trade, and yet who contrives to make her profits. She, you may remark, has nothing to do with clothes, as far as their sale is concerned, but for anything in the way of pieces of silk, satin, linen, or cotton, she has something to say. She must have a bargain, and if she gets it her next move will be to take her purchases to some other pawnbroker and pledge them for as much as she can get. Generally she contrives to get as much as she gave, occasionally, but very rarely, a little more; for if Mrs. Blimmer is a keen judge of value, so are pawnbrokers and their assistants. It is a case of diamond cut diamond, and may remind us of transactions between a serpent and a file, the serpent being represented for the nonce by the daughter of Eve. The latter is now reinstated with her capital, but where is her profit? Like most speculators she looks for that to the general public. She is acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, or anyhow with butchers' and greengrocers' wives; and for them she has bargains—such bargains! Silks and satins which have been pledged by impecunious, perhaps unprincipled, holders at not half their value. She has the pawn-tickets, and will sell them for an old song. All that she gets is profit anyhow, and she goes away rejoicing. The bargains are not very bad ones after all, and the good-natured broker has worked hard for her little gains.

As the sale gets among the bric-à-brac and miscellaneous goods, a different set of buyers come forward, not replacing the others, but supplementing them. For there are some of these old ladies, and middle-aged ones too, crowded on the front

bench, who will deal in anything if they get a chance. A lean and haggard old woman, with the beak of an eagle, sits through it all, clutching the stump of a pencil, and eagerly annotating the catalogue. She does not often bid; but when she lifts that thin and brown and dirty hand, with the stump of black pencil in it, down goes her bid. With all the serious business there is sometimes the relief of a little light badinage. The dealers have their jokes about which the profane know nothing. An oil painting is under the hammer—a Wilkie in a solid gold frame—that is knocked down for half-a-guinea, and somebody points out a figure as a striking likeness of "Boss," a joke which brings down the house. There is another painting, after the Dutch School, with heavy frame, river, woods, and waterfall—all for a pound, and the waterfall gets well chaffed. There was nothing jocose about the poor creature who pawned it, perhaps, stealing out at dusk with the picture under her shawl.

Ah, there would be some strange histories told by these inanimate things if they could speak. They do speak in a certain manner here and there. Here is a delicate little bag of Russian leather, into which have been thrown all a young woman's pretty paraphernalia: the bracelets, the rings, the necklace, and the sparkling aigrette for the hair. There was haste, perhaps terror, when all was heaped together and carried off to the pawnbroker's. Desperate need was at hand, nor has its grasp relaxed, for it all happened more than a year ago, and now all the pretty trinkets are gone for ever. The great, black, burly man who has got them turns them over in his hands as if he held a sample of wheat.

But although the dealers and brokers cluster always thickly about the scene, and seem to find a pleasure in it, the uninitiated can't stand much at a time. Even the auctioneers are relieved at not long intervals, for anything like a wearied intonation in the voice would quickly affect the bidding. It would seem that, saying as little as do those who officiate at any of these great auction marts, and never dwelling upon anything, the manner of putting up the lots would not matter much; but one is assured that this is by no means the case, and that everything depends upon a good salesman.

It is a fine place to pick up a headache, anyhow, is a busy sale-room, and so away

for a little fresh air, having ascertained that the Postmaster-General's lot will not come on till after five o'clock. Let us return just then, with the same crowd gathered about the arena, gas flaring cheerfully all over the place, and nobody in the least bit tired. By this time they have worked down to lot five hundred and something, and there is the ancient mariner still full of interest and curiosity. "Now they haff come to the dead man's things!" But the sale runs on at the same monotonous speed, and yet there is a stir of curiosity among the people gathered around, for it is not every day in the year that we have the Postmaster-General under the hammer.

At first there are only commonplace bundles of commonplace articles of wearing apparel. Then comes a lot of books, new and neatly-bound volumes for the most part, such as any bookstall might be proud of; but no first editions or rare plates, and if they sell for a shilling apiece all round that may be considered a good price. Then comes a basket—a bushel basket, it seems—that, emptied upon the counter, shows a collection of the prettiest, silliest, most useful, and useless nick-nacks, such as would fully stock any ordinary bazaar. Here are purses without end, and pouches, replacing the ancient baccy box, and marked, not with her, but his name—Charlie, and Archie, and Fred, done in coloured plush with such tender care—and little note-cases, and portfolios, and blotting-books. It is quite evident that most of these things are gifts—intended gifts, that is—and mostly from young women to young men. There is such a pretty, dainty, coaxing air about them, and a pleasant odour, as of a garden of flowers, wafted over the heads of the crowd. But how did all these tokens of affection get astray?

Well, Charlie, and Archie, and Fred, and the rest of them, may change their bachelor quarters pretty often, and don't always leave their address behind them; and so the dainty little parcels go to the Dead Letter Office, and when they are opened there isn't a scrap of writing inside them. That is prudent enough in the dear boys, but the dear girls, surely they are not so worldly wise? But what can any one make of such a script as this: "Ted, from his little Izzie"? Could all the cunning men and the cunning messengers of the Postmaster-General, could all his horses and all his men, ever find

out little Izzie, and give her back her precious little gift? And you, madame, when you send a change of raiment and half-a-dozen pairs of socks to your husband, who is touring in the Highlands, by Parcel Post, do you ever think of putting your address inside? Of course you don't, you reply, indignantly; doesn't he know the handwriting well enough, and where it comes from? True, but when that lucky fellow has changed his mind, and gone to Aberdeen instead of Oban, how is the derelict parcel to find its way back to you?

Yet there must be an infinite number of little miseries, trifling enough in comparison with the great misery and want wrapped up in these unredeemed pledges, but still poignant enough. How wounded are the feelings of Clara because Jack took no notice of that encouraging little trifle she sent him; the coldness that came between the pair may date from the disappearance of that little parcel within the cold shades of the Dead Letter Office. But it is useless to harrow up one's feelings unnecessarily. Enough that there are fragments of sorrow and disappointment finally swept into that bushel basket, and handed over to the lucky purchaser. "A speculative lot," adds the auctioneer, cheerily. And no doubt he is right.

Next comes a sack like a hop-pocket—not in size, but packed as tightly and as roundly, and with what, at first sight, seems to be nothing but babies' little shoes, those first and earliest foot-coverings, which are done in coloured worsteds and tied with satin ribbons. Everybody who has gone through the experience knows what showers of little shoes descend upon the happy young couple when the first baby makes its appearance; afterwards it is different, and the poor things may go barefoot for all anybody cares—but for the first there are more than showers, there are hailstorms. But how to account for their getting into the dead letter sack is more difficult. But a second glance shows that the sack contains other things besides babies' shoes. White fleecy, woolly wraps, flimsy kerchiefs, collars, cuffs, all kinds of feminine gear of the light, and white, and fantastic order—some, perhaps, more or less closely connected with the original baby; or, again, friendly gifts between ancient maids and budding school-girls. Anyhow, this sack with its fantastic contents causes a briaker competition than has hitherto appeared, and is knocked down

for five or six pounds. "He knows of something in it," is the comment of a knowing-looking dealer close by. What is the something? A bit of point lace, or costly Brussels, which may be worth all the money, and more, perhaps. Again, as the auctioneer says, here we have speculative lots.

After this, a whole host of pipes rattle upon the counters: briarwoods, and boxwoods, and little meerschaums in cases, and big Dutch pipes with tassels to them, and all kinds of wooden ware, bodkin-cases, needle-cases, boxes of every kind, and numerous trifles of sorts, as the gardeners say; and these are rattled off again quickly enough. And the next combatant in the arena is in the form of a box of jewellery—imitation—but pretty and sparkling: pins, and studs, and brooches, watches, too, of the cheaper kind, with chains and earrings, and bangles, and anything else you like to name. But no one suspects hidden gold among them, and the crowd is listless about such things. Then there are boxes of cigars—not many of these, but some seven hundred cigars altogether—which sell for about six shillings a hundred—a cheap smoke for somebody, but possibly nasty also.

Still the sale goes on: more trinkets, more nicknacks, more pipes, more miscellaneous articles of clothing, all knocked down at the very topmost speed, and calling for no remark, till, after the last crack of the hammer, the auctioneer calls out, "Drawing-room suite," and the hoarse voices of the assistants outside re-echo, "Here's the lot," and the auctioneer again, "How much shall we say, five guineas?" Then we know that we have no more concern with the Postmaster-General, for nobody has yet sent a drawing-room suite by post, or even Parcel Post.

Soon we are out in the gas-lighted streets, where people are already beginning to assemble before theatre doors—happy managers!—and where the brightness, and rattle, and glitter, drive all futile speculations out of one's head.

ON BEING TOO PARTICULAR.

THERE are people who would find plenty to criticise in Heaven itself, supposing they were to be allowed to enter into the hereafter by its pearly gates. They are much to be pitied. It may be a mark

of superiority to be always dissatisfied. Philosophers even go so far as to tell us that this feeling of discontent with terrestrial things is an unfailing accompaniment of genius, and that the contented man is of little more account as an intelligent being than a pig in its sty munching acorns. This is all very well in its way; but it must not be accepted as dogma. It is an utterance on a par with that of the coloured man who held up his hands in horror at sight of a European, and declared that white folk were awfully ugly.

Imagination is a fine gift, but it wants managing. It runs well in harness with a good stout bridle of common sense. Without this bridle, however, it is like to lead its master a pretty dance. Hey presto! at the merest prompting, off it goes, clean out of the realm of earth and experience, right into the middle of space, with the cross-lights of unnumbered spheres confusedly upon it, and strange breezes fanning its hot impulsive exterior. It is a ticklish piece of work to get it back to earth; and it is so exhausted by the madcap scamper out of the ordinary bounds that its luckless master is for a time as prostrate as if he had been flogged with positive misfortune. Under the false enthusiasm of an hour ago he would have done all things—or at least attempted them—so bracing was its influence upon his mind; but when this same fancy is temporarily laid by the heels, he is useless.

It seems probable that a little imagination is very much better as a possession than a great deal. A little is, to the daily incidents and events of life, what salt is to meat. The relish it bestows upon them is just as good as a pleasure. If you are in a sorry plight you can see help coming by its aid, though, on the other hand, you are not tormented by grievous relapses of impatience and despair upon the delay of the arrival of such help, as you would surely be if you were as imaginative as a poet. And in like manner, when you are in the thick of prosperity—under its gentle, judicious suggesting, you are able to look ahead, foresee the inevitable squalls which shall follow such a spell of fine weather, and be prepared for them. In fact, a certain amount of imagination is like ballast to a ship, whereas too much acts like a storm upon the same ship, catching it with all sails set.

You can apply this as a test to most of the matters of life.

Take marriage, for example. Goodness knows whither an excessively vivacious imagination has a tendency to carry men or women on the eve of matrimony. They are prone, no doubt, to think themselves at the gates of Paradise. A good time is coming for them, with few or no drawbacks. What can be more delightful than to live ever in sight of each other, until death does them part—a contingency, by-the-way, the thought of which acts upon them like momentary paralysis! Their hope of happiness has been so immensely agreeable to them that they cannot for an instant suppose the realisation will be less agreeable. They will thus dwell in the sunlight of joy, year after year, with never an abatement in their rapture.

Of course, however, a "but" soon comes to modify this pretty picture. It is a terrible word, this innocent little conjunction! Think how much annoyance and grief it ushers in to us in an average year. "The market opened well; but——" "Baby is certainly better than she was yesterday; but still——" "No, sir, your hair is not going grey, that I can see, but it is thinning very fast." "I do love you very much, and always have loved you, but I love some one else better." And so on. I wonder we mortals have not combined to put a ban upon the wretched little monosyllable. Perhaps it is saved by our imagination. We know that it is a nuisance and a terror to us, but yet there may be a background of new light to the cloud which it suddenly brings for the obliteration of our present happiness.

To recur to the married couple—with wild imaginations. No sooner do they find out that they are deceived, that their expectations are cheated, than they are instantly as wretched as they hoped to be happy. John cannot bear the sight of the Mary whom he thought so enduringly angelic. Mary judges John to be a brute instead of the delightful, chivalrous lover he once seemed to be. Their past rhapsodies come before them, and make them feel ill with disgust at their own imbecility. John, especially, is in a humour of impatience when he is reminded, perhaps tauntingly, that not so long ago Mary was his "own only darling." Memory is very tiresome at such times. It seems a pity that words once uttered cannot be as if they had never been spoken; the effect of a moment is not meant to be dragged ruthlessly forward again and again in the

after-time. Tender phrases and caresses are not a whit less precious than the friends and relatives who have gone before us to another world; and the disinterment of either is little less than sacrilege, be the motive what it may.

Notwithstanding their apparent aversion for each other as the outcome of their fine anticipations, John and Mary may yet shake down into domestic life of an easy, satisfying kind, by-and-by. But there is sure to be an interval; nor is it by any means an even chance for or against their mutual sacrifice of the very hopes which are the cause of their trouble. They may prefer to remain aggrieved, and either live a life of armed neutrality together, or separate by agreement, with unmitigated spite against Dame Fortune.

It might have been so sweetly different if they had sacrificed two-thirds of their hopes before marriage; if they had gone to the altar together with just a pocketful of fancy and no more. This would then have enabled them to condone each other's failings, and cast a reasonable amount of colour—and no more—upon the good qualities which were their mutual attraction. It would not then have been a serious calamity, when, a month or two after marriage, John whispered to himself that Mary's beauty was not always equally entrancing, that her right eyebrow was certainly darker than the left one, and that she stepped out with the right foot instead of the left. There is no denying that these are grave defects in a girl; but he was, in a sense, forearmed. And so with Mary in relation to John. What if he did yawn when she was talking to him in her prettiest way? Was it so very heinous a crime in him that he did not put his arm round her waist and kiss the tip of her ear anything like as many times in the week since as before their marriage? Not a bit of it. Thanks to John's common sense as a moderator of his imagination, he knew all through that Mary was human as well as angelic. She had proved herself angelic; she was now showing herself thoroughly human. That was all; and perhaps she was fully as fascinating when unmistakably human, as when apparently angelic. And Mary, too, from the very beginning, had inspired assurances that John did not, because he could not, mean all the dulcet, complimentary things he said about her. It was quite enough pleasure to her to feel that she was capable of exciting such superlative moods in him. Afterwards,

the dear fellow as husband would be welcome, ten thousand times, to fall asleep with his head on her shoulder, while she read to him, or sung one of those songs which he used to say he would be content to listen to for all eternity.

It seems a great mistake to be too particular in this life.

Some people make too much of their virtues; while others, the sensitive ones, think because they have their due share of the imperfections of our nature, they are among the most wicked people of the earth.

Of these two classes the former is the more common and the more detestable. It is easy to console the man who bewails his innate iniquity and his many sins of omission and commission. One has only to bid him look around and conscientiously compare himself with his fellows, and then take comfort in the recognition that he is by no means really a chief among sinners. Besides, the words of Rogers, the poet, to Stewart Rose—who was just such a sensitive man—are ready to hand on this subject: "I know that during your life you have done many kind and generous things; but them you have forgotten, because a man's good deeds fall from his memory, while those which are the reverse keep constantly recurring to it." Perhaps this would have been better still if Rogers had said "a good man's good deeds," etc., that is, a genuinely good man. This would, moreover, give our friend just the tonic of self-respect which would brace him fitly for association with his fellow-men.

One does not meet very many human beings of this kind. It is, I suppose, regrettable if George Eliot's dictum—that the conscientious person never knows what it is to be self-contented—be thoroughly credible.

But there is no lack of the class who walk abroad in the world with elevated chin and self-righteous expressions on their faces. It has been a fashion to seek and find examples of such men and women more especially among the congregations of Dissenting Chapels. This seems a little ungenerous and unnecessary. It may, however, be due to the little Bethel practice of an open confession of sins. Such a practice would tend to make hypocrites of most of us. As if it were in human nature, though made ever so regenerate by ministers of religion, for a man to make it a system to tell out his illicit thoughts and deeds to his fellow-creatures without reserve!

Probably our friends of the little ugly brick chapels in out-of-the-way places do think they unbosom themselves so completely. But it is their judgement that is at fault in such a case, not their intentions. They keep back what they think is unimportant, which, nevertheless, would much qualify their brethren's opinion of them if they were to make a clean breast of it.

No; you and I are acquainted with many excellent persons of the national Church Establishment, who comport themselves as if they could hardly speak two words with a beggar or a being in rags without defilement. They believe fully in externals. It is so precious to be able to look every one in the face without winking; to be in the family pew punctually at half-past ten every Sunday morning without missing once in the year; and to be pervaded with a sense of uprightness that nothing in the world can diminish. And yet how odious such good persons are! Thanks to their belief that

Virtue and vice are never in one soul;
A man is wholly wise, or wholly is a fool,

they are among the worst of companions, and are by no means the best kind of Christians. It is not to such as they that the man or woman in distress is impelled to apply.

It is salutary discipline to travel into foreign lands before setting up for a critic of our own institutions and customs. Indeed, only upon an apprenticeship of this sort can aught in praise or dispraise of ourselves worth hearing be said. A traveller realises that though we are an excellent nation of islanders, we are not quite the pattern men and women our home-stayers are so fond of fancying. He also learns that we have a fine stock of prejudices stowed away in the wallet upon which we are accustomed to draw for our virtues.

A little indifference to one's self, to one's food, one's personal appearance, clothes, and even one's mental and moral condition, is a wonderful aid in life. When I refer to indifference to one's moral condition, I do not, of course, wish to be an advocate of license; but I do protest that it is well, having done one's duty to the best of one's ability, to await the issue with tranquillity.

History informs us that many great men have shown considerable disregard for what they ate and what they put on. One cannot, indeed, really imagine a

supremely great man over scrupulous in these matters. Would George Washington have dismissed his cook if she sent him up a burnt chop? Would Edison quarrel mortally with his tailor for being an inch or two out of a fit? I ask this at random. Perhaps Washington was testy at dinner-time; and perhaps the great inventor is more of a martinet than I believe him to be. But if I am wrong in these individual instances, I am still right in principle.

Sir Humphrey Davy, it is said, "rarely washed himself; and on the plea of saving time, he used to put on his clean linen over his dirty, so that he has been known to wear at the same time five shirts and five pairs of stockings." Here is a rare example of the indifference of the man of genius to the mere husk, or series of husks, which keep that royal part of him, his mind, in working order. Yet was not Sir Humphrey a mere sloven, content at all times with the first article of clothing upon which he might lay his hand. Though he was so reckless in the matter of shirts upon common occasions, when he used to go fishing, "he would wear green," to resemble vegetable life as much as possible, so that the trout might have some difficulty in distinguishing the biped from the mere roots of the field; and when shooting he wore a scarlet cap, "to shield himself from accidents from other guns."

You often meet with men who give you the idea that they would die rather than eat something to which they are unaccustomed. How foolish and narrow-minded this seems! Who can tell to what straits of destitution one may some day be reduced? To be sure, our civilisation is so very mighty in these days that we can, with fair presumption of success, challenge Dame Nature herself to bring us within trembling distance of famine. Still, it is as well to be prepared. Have you ever tried a salad of buttercups—blossoms and roots—or a dish of speckled snails; or a tender kitten, killed in the first month; or a horseflesh steak? Save the last, these "plats" are very inexpensive, and not at all an insult to the stomach. None of them are nauseating, and they might well serve as preliminary to a much enlarged list of edibles to which the man who is not too particular might habituate himself.

Only the very few among us run any risk, in the course of our peregrinations

and vicissitudes, of being invited to such objectionable dinners as it was the lot of Bruce, the explorer, to eat. Such very nasty feeders as the Abyssinians of his day are becoming extinct. Fancy sitting down to table and seeing the meat walk alive into the room? That was their custom. And they ate it alive, too, the brutes! The wretched ox was tied fast head and legs, and then, by a delicate incision on both sides of the backbone, near the haunches, the attendants were able to strip its skin away, to enable them to cut alices from the poor animal again and again without touching an artery. The guests ate the meat raw and quivering, to the music of the low roars and bellowing of pain of the ox of which it was a part.

This is hideous; and even the least particular of men may be excused for shirking an experience of the kind.

Still, upon general grounds, it does seem well to get off our high horse of scrupulosity just as often as we feel the smallest inclination to do so. It not only makes us abundantly more sensible of the brotherhood between ourselves and our fellow-men, but it makes us robusiter citizens of the world. The man who has always worn Bond Street clothes, dined off the preparations of a French cook, lived in an atmosphere of perfect domestic bliss, and felt no doubt about the happiness in store for him in the next world, may be a very amiable and pretty fellow, but he is profoundly ignorant of life. It is good to rough it, it is good to be plagued by pain and trouble now and then, and a downright heavy misfortune acts upon the system like a cold bath. These are the heralds to that condition of judicious indifference which really seems to be the most comfortable attitude in which to receive and account for the various pleasures and annoyances which bow themselves into our society as we jog along through life.

ON THE WAR-PATH.

IN THE FIELD.

In this article, "in the field" is not used in the meaning in which it is technically used in the Salvation Army. It is, in Salvation Army language, used to designate the work in the various corps scattered all over the country—an officer having passed through his training and being appointed

to his corps is said to have been sent "into the field"—but here we mean in the field of work where war is waged against the want, the poverty, and the destitution of London. In fact, we want to give an account of the actual commencement of the work in connection with General Booth's new Social Scheme, and also of the organisations at hand to help the working of the scheme—of the Salvation Army Rescue and Stum work.

In a small house in Upper Thames Street are the temporary head-quarters of the Social Reform Wing—a house even now too small for the work. On the ground-floor, on either side of the door, are the labour bureaux—on the one side for women, on the other for men. During the five months in which the place has been open, five thousand applications for work have been received. All applications are recorded and entered in registers, so that any one applying is kept before the office, should application be made by any one for a workman of that man's particular trade; for it is by no means only the actual unemployed labourer who applies. Many well-skilled artisans make use of this office.

The most important work controlled from here, however, is the work of the Industrial Workshops and the Shelters. To the workshops are sent all men—that is to say, to the capacity of the place—who apply for work and who are utterly destitute. At present the number is about one hundred and forty. The men receive a ticket admitting them to the workshops, which are in Hanbury Street, Whitechapel; and thither we will go to see what sort of work is done, and what sort of men they are who do it.

The routine and system of the work is simple: the men work all day, and in return for their work they receive food and shelter at the Salvation Army Shelter in Whitechapel Road. Every week a return is filled up, showing how many days each man has worked, how many meals he has had, how much his keep has cost, how much his work is worth, what his conduct has been, and whether or no he has been industrious. If his report is good, he receives a grant, varying from about four to ten shillings. The doors of the workshops are open at seven for the entrance of the men, and remain open till five minutes past, after which time no one is admitted before breakfast. Work goes on till 8.30, at which hour the men go out, each man as he leaves receiving a ticket, which entitles him to breakfast at

the Shelter. They return at nine and work till half-past twelve, at which hour there is a short prayer meeting, after which the men pass out, provided with a ticket for dinner. Work is resumed at two and continued till half-past five, at which hour the men leave work for the day, with two tickets: one entitling them to supper and one to a bed. It will be thus seen that no food is given except as payment for work done, and there is no actual charity.

Let us now go into the workshops and have a look round. The place itself was originally a builder's yard, and as we enter we find ourselves in an open space, which is utilised for the sawing up of planks for the carpenters and joiners. In one corner is a small room, which is used as a gas-fitters' shop—there being at present three gas-fitters in the shops—and straight across the yard are the men employed on cutting firewood. To this work is put any man who, on entering the works, is found to have no trade at all. Here are about thirty men employed; and most certainly they are not the sort of men one would expect to see working anywhere—men whom one would expect to see loafing about the streets, picking up odd jobs, or anything else that might happen to come handy. Here they are working steadily enough, and apparently working hard. Going upstairs we come to the carpenters' room, running round the side of the yard. Here are at work many skilled men, making articles for the different premises of the Salvation Army—all the benches used at meetings; doors and window-frames for a "Prison Gate Home" which is soon to be opened; desks for offices; and plenty of other articles, all as well turned out as possible. At one end of the room is a division, beyond which brush-making is going on. Men and boys with no trade are taught this, and every sort of brush conceivable seems to be turned out here.

Going up another flight of stairs we enter a room where mats are being made, and the men who are making them learnt the art for the most part in prison. What a strange variety these twelve men present! One particularly struck us; he looked as if he had been a gentleman once, but there he was, mat-making with the rest, having learnt the work in the same disastrous school. As we go along the passage strange sounds arise, which sound strange in connection with a workshop. It is singing, surely, and singing it turns out

to be as we enter the room where the sounds come from. In this room all sorts of odd jobs are done, mostly by men who, when they entered the workshops, had no trade. Here is a man cutting out boot-laces from odd pieces of leather; here is a man rolling the laces; over there are two or three men making nose-bags for horses, sacks, and so on; and in the corner there is a man mending a boot—it is to be presumed he learnt that before he entered the place—and all these men are singing over their work.

Going down and crossing the yard, we go down some steps to a large cellar, which is utilised for the work of the painters and varnishers. They are now engaged on some Salvation Army benches, and uncommonly comfortable benches they are too, and very proud the foreman is of them, as the design for them was made in the workshops.

Once more making our way into the yard, in the opposite corner to the stairs up which we went first are more stairs, which lead us to the store-rooms, which run round the other two sides of the yard. These rooms are two—one containing the materials for use, canvas for sacks, coconut-fibre for mats, ironmongery, straps for nose-bags, and so on; the other room filled with the articles made in the various departments described above.

Such are the workshops, and as to the men who work there—well, it is surprising to hear that about one-third of these men, who were in utter destitution when they came here, are skilled workmen, the remainder being unskilled labourers or loafers. The skilled men have come down in the world from a variety of causes. Drink accounts for a good many, while in one case, a fire which destroyed a man's tools was the immediate cause of his come-down in the world.

The men remain for varying lengths of time in the works, the longest period of service of any man at present at work being three months. When a man who has sunk to the depths to which these men had descended when they applied for relief, rises again to the position in which he regains his power of work and the dignity of labour, he soon gets work himself and no longer needs to exist on charity; while the loafers learn to work, and are helped by the Salvation Army to find employment. When a man is in a position to leave the workshops he is helped with a grant to purchase clothes or tools, the amount depending on

his conduct during his stay. It is a curious thing that since the place has been open only one man has gone away without giving notice of his intention. In the register which is kept of the men and their work, against his name appears the entry, "Disappeared with two shillings and sixpence."

Almost opposite these workshops is the Women's Shelter, where for threepence a woman or girl can obtain shelter, supper, and breakfast. The building was formerly used for swimming baths, and lends itself very well to its present purposes. The first thing that strikes us as we enter is a passage to the right, which is devoted to washing apparatus—a long row of basins with hot and cold water laid on, with long, clean towels on rollers giving evidence of the fact. Beyond this lavatory is a room where there are two big coppers, one for the use of the women in any washing of clothes in which they may wish to indulge, and one to provide hot water for any woman who may come in early, and may have been able to provide for herself a little tea or anything of that sort for consumption in the interval before supper. Passing from this we come to the general room, which is used for sitting-room, dining-room, and meeting-room—for a short meeting of a cheerful description is held every evening. The furniture is not grand, consisting as it does of benches and tables; while, by way of ornament, piles of plates and mugs are ranged against the walls. From here we enter the sleeping rooms, of which there are three: one for young girls, one for women who have babies with them, and one for the remainder. This last room, which we may presume to have been the principal bath, has a gallery running round it, which is also full of sleeping places, and contains altogether one hundred and eighty beds, if beds they may be called. The bedsteads are simple, their simplicity being only equalled by that of the bedclothes. They consist of a frame of wood, long enough to enable one to lie down, and just broad enough to enable one to turn over; a sloping slab at one end forms the pillow. The mattress is of American cloth, stuffed with seaweed; this rests on the floor, one end being carried on to the shelf. The sheets, blankets, and counterpane are all represented by one strip of leather. This is all very simple and very easily cleaned, and for warmth the whole place is kept beautifully warm by a good system of hot-water pipes. The inmates go out at eight,

and then breakfast at a farthing a head is served for children, while in connection with this Shelter is a small crèche, which at present holds eighteen children, and where women who sleep at the Shelter can leave their babies when they go out to work.

The various men's Shelters are much the same in arrangement; but fourpence is charged instead of threepence; and some of them are also general food-depôts, where food can be obtained, varying from a basin of soup for one farthing, to a substantial meal of meat and vegetables, for threepence. The Shelters at present number five, including the women's, and accommodate nine hundred and twenty persons nightly; while, in all, two hundred and twenty-five thousand persons have used them since they were started. Three of these Shelters are also food-depôts, at which about six thousand cheap meals are supplied daily.

Having described the workshops, and visited a Shelter, let us go to Mare Street, Hackney, and find out what we can about what is termed the Salvation Army Rescue Work. This work was first started six years ago in Whitechapel; and at present there are thirteen Homes altogether—eight in London, and five in the country—one each in Glasgow, Belfast, Middlesbrough, Plymouth, and Cardiff, having in all accommodation for three hundred and eighteen girls. In addition to these Homes, there is a small Book-binding Factory in Shoreditch, which gives employment to about fourteen girls, and which last year made a profit of about three hundred pounds. The work is done by about one hundred and forty-five officers; a small Training Home being included in the offices at Mare Street.

The house itself bears, for a wonder, no outward and visible sign of Salvation Army occupation, and we may almost think we are mistaken, till the door is opened, and we are admitted by a girl wearing the unmistakable uniform. A tour over the house will quickly give us some idea of the work directed from here. We start with the Financial Secretary's Office. Then comes the Correspondence Office, which deals with, on an average, one hundred letters a day. Next is an apartment devoted to arranging for the adoption of children; a good many cases of deserted children come under the notice of the workers. Then we have the Enquiry and Help Department, which undertakes the tracing of missing friends and relations. Last

year, out of sixteen hundred and five cases, the Department was successful in tracing five hundred. The Situation Department claims our attention next, which is simply a registry office for servants. It is open to all, no matter of what creed, though, of course, the majority of the girls are Salvationists; and the people who apply for servants are of all descriptions. Since the department has been opened, thirteen hundred girls and fifteen hundred mistresses have passed through the books; it has only been opened about two years and a half. Very amusing are some of the applications from the girls, and some from the mistresses, too.

One good lady requires "A Red-hot Christian, but not too old"; another asks for a lively girl; while a third must have been somewhat difficult to please—she asks for a "Girl who does not talk loud; neither must she laugh, or sing loud." While the girls are as particular. The following are some of their demands: "Please get me a place with two quiet, elderly people. I like to be alone." "I have had a good education, and can play the piano." The next one is rather mixed: "I am an out-and-out Salvationist, and I want Army liberty—of course, that is, sympathy, and to wear uniform—though I am not one much for meetings—that is, I should not always want to be running about to meetings. Some ladies are frightened of Salvation Army servants on that account. I like to shine at home and go about quietly." The next one is delicious; and we hope the two girls have not found what they want: "We must go together, and be near. We want good wages, plenty of liberty, and mistress must not interfere, or go into the kitchen." There is a calm and cool impudence about this last specimen which is absolutely refreshing.

Now, to turn to the Homes themselves. There is a general Receiving Home, to which all girls are first sent, and where they are kept before being drafted into other Homes, for periods varying from a few days to four months. The house contains accommodation for thirty-five girls; and attached to it are eight officers.

The routine is very simple. The girls rise at half-past six, and are down by seven; breakfast is at half-past seven, after which a short prayer meeting is held. At nine work is commenced—some girls doing the housework, others being employed with their needles. Prayers again at half-past twelve, and then dinner, after which the

girls work till half-past four, when they have tea. They work again from six to seven. From seven to eight they have music and singing, or in the summer go into the garden; at eight they have supper; at a quarter-past eight they go to bed; and all lights are out at a quarter to nine.

In addition they hold a regular prayer meeting once a week, and on Sundays go to service at the nearest Salvation Army barracks, and the girls sometimes are sent out to housework. To look at the girls as they sit at work no one would think that two days ago several of them were in utter want and destitution, miserable and wretched. Cheerful they are and comfortable; the principle observed at the Home being that all rule should be by love, not by compulsion.

When passed from this Home to one of the general homes, the girls remain for a period of not less than three months, and then situations are found for them. The officers of the Home in which a girl has been always keep up a correspondence with her, and encourage her to visit them, so that in the cases of girls who have no real home, they come to regard these Rescue Homes as taking its place. The various Homes are used for various work, the proceeds of which go towards their support. Amongst the industries carried on are needlework, book-binding, knitting by means of knitting machines, making washing texts, making the outfits for the girls, shirt-making, and paper bag-making. These industries in the last three years have realized one thousand and thirty-seven pounds.

Now as to results. Taking the last year they are as follows. Four hundred and thirty-four girls were sent to situations; one hundred and twenty-one were returned to their friends; forty-two were sent to other Homes; twenty-six were sent to trade; three were married, and three died; four hundred and thirty-five were assisted temporarily; one hundred and forty at the end of the year were under treatment in hospital, and two hundred and twenty were in the Homes. The number of unsatisfactory cases included one hundred and thirty-seven girls who left wilfully; thirteen were sent to the Shelters; and seven were dismissed. All this is without doubt good work, and, beyond questions of religion, most worthy to be encouraged.

There is one other branch of work which is connected, more or less, with the

Social Scheme, and that is the work carried on by the Slum Brigade. There are over a dozen Slum stations in London from which this work is carried on. The station I visited is in a street off Drury Lane. Here live the Captain, Lieutenant, and two Cadets—all women. They rise at seven; have all the housework done by ten; have prayers till half-past ten, when they go out visiting till half-past twelve; then go out again from half-past two till five. Generally, in the evening, from half-past six till seven, they have a children's meeting; an open-air meeting from half-past seven till eight; and an indoor meeting from eight till a quarter to ten; while on Sundays they hold seven meetings. I think that, whether we approve or not, that is a very good record of work. And what do they do? Well, the first thing they do is to make a house-to-house visitation, whereby they find out who requires their aid, or who likes them to call. As a rule, they are well received; though, sometimes, they have the door banged in their faces. Having found where they are wanted, they help as much as they can by calling on those who are alone; nursing those who have no one to look after them; and taking the sick lemonade or soup. In my wanderings with one of the officers, I came across one case which they had found out by house-to-house visitation. Two old ladies were the object of our call, and we found them in at work. They were bright and cheerful old souls, who have kept themselves for twenty-five years by needlework, earning between them about ten shillings a week, and paying four shillings and sixpence for their rooms. They never have any one near them, and welcome the Slum Officers as a ray of light. Another woman we went to see was an Irish Roman Catholic, evidently dying, with no one near her, and with an awful dread of the night. The attention of the Slum Officers had been called to her by a policeman, and one of them was sitting up with her every night till she should recover or be removed to the infirmary. Many other people we visited, more or less poor—some in garrets, some in basements—but all glad to see my companion, and all seemingly cheered up by our visit. In many cases most certainly, we were visiting people who had not been found out by any other relief-organisation, and, although the Slum Brigade would prefer all those they help to go to meetings, nevertheless, in times of need, no dis-

inction is made in creeds, and a Roman Catholic, Church of England man, or a man of no religion at all, is helped as willingly as a Salvationist.

With these visits with the Slum Brigade I ended my journeyings with the Salvation Army, and here have tried, without entering into controversy, and expressing as few opinions of my own as possible, to lay before our readers a bare statement of the organisation of the Salvation Army, and of the principal work on which the Social Scheme is to be drafted.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIR EVERARD wrote that night to his solicitors, though the letter could not go at once; but it was well to get business off his mind immediately, since it had come to him, and not keep it over to spoil another day. He requested them to make a suitable addition to Miss Treverton's allowance, saying that it was convenient to him that she should not return at once to the Chase, which must be thoroughly put in order before his return with his wife. He should have preferred his daughter to live until her marriage with her uncle, Lord Carlarrie; but if there were reason to believe that her marriage would not take place so soon as was expected, she was of course free to make her own plans. Naturally, at her age, and in the prospect of her marriage, there could be no question of a separate establishment. Her allowance was already ample; but probably a succession of visits would entail increased expenditure. He and Lady Treverton were on the point of leaving Bigorre. They had not determined on their next move; but until further notice letters might be addressed to him at the Poste Restante, Rome.

This letter finished, Sir Everard felt that he had done all that could be fairly required of mortal man in his honeymoon. The other letters he put into one cover, addressed to his agent at Oswaldburn, excepting that from Clay and Hay, which he carefully burned.

"I cannot answer such stuff civilly," he thought; "best to take no notice. They will think I have missed it. It is the most recently written of the lot, so it will keep."

Then he went to find his wife, to take

up the love story where the thread had been dropped when business intruded serpent-like into their Eden.

To his surprise, he found her in the garden, sitting under the orange-trees with a strange lady. He looked with quick scrutiny at this unknown woman, with whom his wife was talking so familiarly. He had never yet seen her talking to a woman whom he did not know. This must be one of her old friends. It was interesting to see a specimen of those old friends of hers of whom she never spoke.

Not a very favourable specimen, this, he trusted. She was a pretty elegant woman; she had the bearing and manner of one who belonged to the great world, but her face was faded and marked with lines of care which one does not see usually in that world, where, if they have been drawn by sorrow that is no respecter of persons, they are deftly concealed under powder. Her thin, pretty face, too, had too eager an expression to stamp it as of the caste of Vere de Vere; and her dress was painfully shabby and smart. He thought he would have forgiven the shabbiness; but he could not forgive the smartness; least of all, the very badly imitated diamonds in her ears, and all over her thin, white hands. Two little boys, neatly dressed in white sailor suits, played near.

"A lady of position come woefully down in the world," he thought, hastening up to snatch his wife from contact with one who had so come down; for did not the sham jewellery and all the shabby-smartness testify to the blameworthy mode of that descent, and the more than questionable level to which she must have descended?

Beatrix turned a glowing face to meet him—a face all beaming with sympathy and pride.

"This is my husband," she said to her friend, with the manner of one who makes two people acquainted who must be as delighted to know each other as she is to perform the introduction. "Everard, let me introduce you to the Princess Castella."

Sir Everard bowed with grave courtesy, thinking, in spite of the high-bred grace with which the lady acknowledged the introduction:

"It is too absurd that Beatrix should be taken in by a mere adventuress like this, and swallow a title that, with its over-done splendour, matches exactly the paste jewellery. I must apologise to Her

Highness for taking you away," he said, aloud. "Will you kindly come indoors? I must consult you about some business."

"Won't it keep?" asked Beatrix, rising reluctantly.

Then, looking past Sir Everard, she started, looked perplexed, and blushing to a deep crimson, took her husband's arm, which he had not offered her.

Sir Everard looked round in surprise. A young man was coming along the covered walk: an Italian, as beautiful as a god, with flashing black eyes, noble, delicate features, and rich colouring. His face lighted with radiant pleasure; then suddenly clouded over with a scowl, and he stopped short.

The Princess looked surprised and puzzled.

Beatrix said to the new comer with unnecessary embarrassment in her manner, in nervous belief that she had betrayed too much annoyance, and had given offence, not only to the Italian, but to the Princess, his friend:

"Signor Montefalco, is it not? He once was so good as to give me singing lessons," she said to her husband, still looking distressed and uneasy, as well she might, had she no other reason than the ominous gloom on his countenance.

"It is most gracious of the signora to remember it," said the Italian, bowing with a stateliness in his deep reverence that only an Italian can accomplish.

"I shall see you again soon," she said, hurriedly, but eagerly, to the Princess.

Sir Everard was in that state of mind that sees wrong in everything, and he was annoyed now that she should hurry. What difference could the presence of this miserable Italian make to his wife? It was a grievance, too, that they should all be speaking French. His French was limited; and though he had understood each of the few words that had been spoken, he did not feel sure but that there was more in what they said so quickly than met his slow, British ear.

"Beatrix," he said, angrily, when they were barely out of hearing, "what are you doing with those people? I cannot allow you to speak to such disreputable chance acquaintance. And who is that grinning, posturing dancing-master who presumed to recognise you?"

"He?—oh, nobody," she answered, hastily, rushing to the more interesting subject. "He is an opera-singer, who once gave me some lessons when his company happened to be at Wellingby. He is quite

respectable, really as hard working as if he were a merchant or a farmer. The Princess is charming; you must like her, she is so good and brave, and has such a sad story. She is a French Countess by birth, and she married, when very young, this dreadful Prince, who deserted her, leaving her penniless with these two boys. Her own people are horribly proud and poor; they cannot, or will not, help her, and yet they are so angry because she works to help herself. She has a beautiful voice, so she sings at concerts, and in opera. They are here to give a concert; and I promised we would take tickets, and get all the people to come."

"My dear Beatrix," said Sir Everard, "I cannot allow you to be mixed up with people of that sort. I never heard such a ridiculous story; not good enough to swindle a marine. Princesses do not go upon the stage under their own name, nor do they wear glass ear-rings and bracelets."

"It is perfectly true!" returned Beatrix, so earnestly that Sir Everard gave up his idea that his wife was being deceived by an impossible story, for an alternative that proved more disastrous; he thought that she was answering for the Princess as for an old intimate friend, and his heart turned cold with disappointment and foreboding. "She sings under her own name because the title draws, and her manager pays her ever so much more for allowing it to appear on the bills. And the jewellery—that is so sweet of her! The eldest boy is so passionately fond of her, and so sensitive, that all her troubles have been carefully hidden from him. She hates imitation jewels, but wears them to please the children, who see no difference between them and the jewels she used to wear. They will know soon enough, she says, but she wants to keep the misery from them while they are young. She spends all her money on them, buying them toys and sweets; and her husband's rich relations actually scold her for the waste, while they will do nothing to help her. She is so lonely; the other actresses hate her, for though she tries to be kind and friendly, she draws the line at camaraderie, and cannot help her manner seeming condescending. She——"

"My dear, I really cannot listen to such a cock-and-bull story. I repeat again, that you shall not mix yourself up in the affair," he said, irritably. "Do you think I can allow you to sit gossiping with

third-rate actresses, and see impudent tenors making eyes at you? I forbid you to have anything more to do with them."

Beatrix's face burned with anger, and she drew her hand from her husband's arm.

"I have promised to take the tickets," she said, with icy obstinacy.

"I will send Merton for two, and there is an end of it."

"I promised to take a dozen, and that we would go to the concert and get other people to go."

"You made a very foolish promise, as you know nobody here. You must understand, Beatrix, that any old friendships of the sort must end now."

"Old friendship! I never saw her till this morning!"

"Then whose authority have you, except her own word, for her absurd story?"

Beatrix was silent, seeing the impossibility of convincing him as she had been convinced.

A cold fear took possession of him so firmly that it immediately became conviction. His wife accepted the Princess and her story for the sake of the theatrical-looking Italian whom she had acknowledged as an acquaintance. Sir Everard was not an imaginative man; he had trusted his wife utterly; but here was a cloud of coincidences gathering round him, against his will, against his faith—coincidences so strong and distinct that they seemed to be rapidly losing their cloud-like form, and becoming links in a chain of evidence. Was it possible that his wife had—no, not deceived him; he would not think that for a moment, in spite of any evidence. But were there facts in her past life that it would be unpleasant to find out? Had he not been imprudent to leave the veil over that past? Not—oh, heaven forbid!—that he distrusted it, but because forewarning would have forearmed him against the disagreeableness of other people's curiosity. Was there more in those "rumours" than he would have allowed himself to believe? Again he struggled to keep his confidence above such pestilent whispers, and scorned himself for having allowed them so to influence him that he was predisposed to suspicious more foolish than Othello's, more wicked, more humiliating. What was there in his wife being humbugged by a story? What was there in her recognising a man who had taught her singing a very short time ago?

"Even supposing her story to be true," he said, conciliatorily, "it is not one with which you must be mixed up. You know, at least, that women lose their position by living apart from their husbands, to say nothing of her choosing such a profession and such associates! They may be respectable of their kind, but their kind is not ours. Women who work for their living in any way, especially in one that brings them before the public, lose caste irretrievably."

"Is it then a crime for a woman to work for her living?" asked Beatrix, indignantly, her cheeks aflame.

"You are talking nonsense, and putting words into my mouth," he answered, pettishly, for he knew he was speaking unworthily of himself, and unreasonably, too; but the instincts of his class were strong within him, and he was ruffled and uneasy at finding his wife did not share those instincts, and was not wholly one with him. "We shall leave this place to-morrow, and there is an end of it. I will take two tickets, as you promised. I really cannot afford more."

"To-morrow!" she exclaimed, in consternation.

"You knew we were going to-morrow. What urgent reason have you to wish our plans to be changed?" and he looked at his wife's disappointed face with a tightening at his heart. He dared not give voice to a suspicion he was ashamed of by asking her more. He thought: "Is it possible—has she been too much interested in her Italian singing-master, with his great, staring eyes? A man like that might take a young girl's fancy. What were people about that they allowed a music-master of that sort to come about romantic school-girls?"

He pushed the odious thoughts from him that were stealing into his heart. He looked at Beatrix as she walked beside him, her head held high, and her full red lips pressed together. He could not see much of her face, she held her great sunshade so low over the fine, uncovered head, with its dusky wealth of hair gathered on the top in the stately fashion that suited her stately height and walk. He felt horribly small and mean beside her, and he felt miserably conscious that she was despising him heartily. She looked the very image of outraged dignity.

"Beatrix, dear, I'm a brute," he said, penitently.

She turned her face, all suddenly

softened, and her honest eyes looked straight at his. She put out her hand, and he drew her close to him, as she said, softly:

"I am so grieved I vexed you, dear. I really did not mean any harm. Only I was so sorry for her, and really—really her story is all true!"

"Well, I will believe it on your authority," he answered, smiling, "if that is a condition of peace. Truth, we have often heard, is stranger than fiction."

They went indoors, and fell upon maps and Bradshaws, paper and pencils, to plan their next route. No more allusion was made to the Princess or her concert. They honestly tried to look and talk as if nothing had happened, but both were sadly conscious that the fairy spell was broken, and that the first cloud had come over their sky. Their minds went on working busily while their tongues tried to speak intelligibly.

He was putting down the memory of the handsome singer, of the strange, not at all imaginary, consciousness that they had both betrayed on meeting; of the numerous stories he had heard of school-girls and handsome singing-masters.

She was thinking: "Poor, dear Princess, what a wretch she will think me! I meant to help her so much. It was such happiness to know that I had it in my power for the first time. Oh, what good I could do now if I might—I, who understand so well what a struggle such a life is for a lady, and how help could be delicately given which no one can find out so well as a woman like me, who has wanted it so badly. But now I must not use Everard's money—indeed, even if I had money of my own, it would be wrong to disobey—and now nearly all my own is spent! I must—I must make some more! I should so like to give those boys some really nice toys, and to buy her some good ornaments, and I could send them fruit and flowers when they come to London for their winter season. She hates London! They have always had such miserable lodgings there, in Covent Garden. What pretty things I could send her if I had money of my very own! I must write a story; Everard would never notice. He would only think my diary had grown more voluminous than ever."

The spirit had seized her; pen and paper drew her as wine draws one who has been compelled to weeks of abstinence, and she began to make excuses to herself like a relapsing drunkard. Secrecy might

be wrong, but then charity was certainly right, and certainly must carry the day. She took some slips of paper and a pencil and went and began at once in her room. They had dined, and Sir Everard had gone into the garden to smoke. He looked in to ask her to come too, but she said she could not just now—would come presently. She was scribbling hard; he thought she was busy with routes and notes.

He went out alone and walked to and fro in the quiet garden, watching the stars coming out over the dark mountains. Presently he heard a piano, played with a loud, clear touch. Then a man's voice rang out, full, rich, and sweet, singing "Salve dimora."

"Wretched mountebank!" he said to himself, scornfully, but in spite of his scorn, curiosity drew him to the lighted concert-room of the hotel.

All the people who had dined at the table d'hôte were there, and probably some outsiders from other hotels or houses. The Italian was singing divinely. He looked like a prince, a young Apollo—the very ideal and embodiment of romantic love. He looked very much like a gentleman, too, in his careful evening dress. Sir Everard might not have perceived that, had it not been the very advantage he grudged him most, seeing how it heightened the danger of his other charms. Involuntarily, because disgusted with himself all the while, he compared his own thin, grey hair with the Italian's wavy, brown locks, his crow's-footed eyes with the soft, lustrous, lovelit brown ones, the bright triumphant youthfulness with his own age. A pretty woman was accompanying him, and when he finished his song, the rapturous acclaim from the other women showed what petting and homage would be lavished upon him here. Then the Princess came to sing. This was not a real concert, only a little impromptu affair, intended as a prelude to the real concert; a little tempting bait thrown out to draw an audience into the net.

The Princess walked across the small platform; at a glance he saw and acknowledged that this was not the walk of a conscious public favourite, not even of a queen of song. She walked with the most perfect ease and grace; but exactly as if she were crossing a throne-room to curtsy to an Empress.

But she sang only sweetly and correctly; she was no prima donna. Even he, who was no musician, could see that. Poor creature! how did she expect to get

a hearing beyond the walls of a friendly drawing-room?

"Of course, her singing is nothing," he heard one critical voice say amongst the chorus of admiration; "it is the title that draws."

Was it a real title then, after all? He sauntered out of the room, beginning to believe in her. He glanced at a clock—why, it was an hour since he had left Beatrix. Poor child, how lonely she must be; how injured she must feel!

He opened the door. She was writing again! He would have thought nothing of it, even if he had remembered he had left her writing, for it did not enter his head that she had been going on all this time; but she looked up with such a guilty start, and impulsively put her hand over the written page.

He walked to the window and stood looking out at the starry night. What was she writing that he must not see? He would not deign to look again, much less to ask. He heard her hastily gathering papers together, while she kept up an incoherent run of remarks. Then she went to him and put her arm on his shoulder.

Her touch broke the spell his evil spirit was weaving. What a fool he was to be making mysteries out of nothing again! Did he not remember how imagination had deceived him that very afternoon? Was he to be suspicious of every letter she wrote and received? He must be becoming a monomaniac on the subject.

He looked round boldly to assure himself that her mysterious correspondence had again been the creation of his brain. Why, what does he see—what unexpected appalling evidence that his suspicions were too well founded? Is it a love-letter opened out before him, or even an envelope sealed and addressed to Signor Montefalco, warbling with hypocritical innocence on the ground-floor? He sees simply nothing—not a sign or trace of so much as a shred of paper.

Then why was he not relieved, seeing he must have imagined it all? Alas! of this much he was sure: his wife was writing, and there was a great deal of paper about. She had purposely hidden it.

"I am afraid I have disturbed you," he said, coldly.

He was miserable above any man in the world, and was wondering whether he should accuse his wife and have it out, or simply shoot Montefalco; or, more simply still, shoot himself, and have done with it.

"No, dear, you have not disturbed me," said softly the viper whom he had nursed at his bosom.

"You were writing letters?"

"No; I have not written a letter to-day."

That she should lie to him! He held his breath and gazed fixedly at the black, now starless, night.

"Ah! something touched my face," she cried, suddenly putting up her hand. "A moth, I think. It gave me such a fright!"

Her cry startled him into looking straight to see what had startled her. He did not see the moth, but he saw her clear, candid eyes. Then she put her arm round his neck, saying:

"Dear, what has put you out so dreadfully to-day? You seem all unlike yourself—so odd, and nervous, and depressed. Tell me; there must be no secrets between us, you know."

"Have you no secrets from me, Beatrix?"

He dared to ask her now, looking into her honest, mobile face—a face that surely could not have hidden a secret, much less a falsehood.

But alas for his new hope! She averted her eyes; the dagger pierced his heart again. He sighed heavily.

"I have one little one," she said, smiling, after a moment's pause.

His heavy sigh had seemed at once to reduce the secret to such a tiny matter; an insignificance quite out of all proportion with such a sigh. She thought only of reassuring him.

"And I may not share it!" reproachfully.

"Not just at present; it is not quite ripe. What a libel it is to say that we are the inquisitive sex! I never asked you what the letter was about you were reading such a long time this morning."

This carrying of the war into the enemy's country completely routed him for the time, and that cloud passed over. Tomorrow they would be gone, and there was no more chance of meeting the singers.

But that night Beatrix talked in her sleep. He caught words, names, half sentences; nothing coherent, and names he did not know, till she said: "Not the garden; too many people about. The wood behind the battery."

What battery? Was there a battery at Bigorre? He had not heard of one. Hush!

"If it had been sooner—ever so little—Paolo——"

Something followed, incomprehensible. No matter, he had heard enough. Paolo! She was dreaming of Paolo! Of course, that was Montefalco's name.

So the rest of Sir Everard's night was passed in torment. Next morning he asked his wife as carelessly as he could:

"What did you say was the name of that Italian singer—the man—his Christian name, I mean?"

"I haven't the least idea," she answered, looking surprised and, he thought, uneasy.

"Did you not tell me it was—surely you mentioned Paolo?"

"No!" she exclaimed, startled and colouring. "What put Paolo into your head?" very anxiously.

"It is a common enough Italian name," he said, coldly.

CHAPTER IX.

"My dear Miss Treverton, do let me urge you, for your own sake, to put these wild ideas out of your mind. I can see no ground whatever for your theory. Of course, as we know nothing yet of Lady Treverton's past life and relations, any hypothesis may be suggested; but it seems most unlikely that a man of your father's age and standing would commit himself to such a serious step as marriage without prudent consideration of that step, and well-founded reason. It is not as if he were a hot-headed boy."

"I believe that an old man is far more likely to be rash and foolish than a boy, when a woman of that sort gets him into her toils," said Helena. She was sitting in a stiff-backed chair in Mr. Key's private room in Gray's Inn. "Of course, if you refuse to act for me——"

"It is impossible that we should act for you professionally against Sir Everard, even if it were a cause we felt justified in taking up. But as an old friend, let me urge you to give your scheme up. You have absolutely no ground whatever to go upon."

"I repeat I have sufficient ground. As you refuse to act, I shall engage the services of an extremely clever man who has been recommended to me: Mr. Cullingworth, of Bedford Row."

"My dear young lady," said the lawyer, startled, "pray be careful. Cullingworth may be clever, but he has not the best of reputations for honourable practice. Here I may speak again as a friend. I could not, as your legal adviser, give you such an opinion. We legal hawks must not pick out other hawks' e'en."

"You only prove to me," Helena returned, haughtily, "that you are afraid of investigation. The cleverest man in the world cannot find out what does not exist. Now, about this outrageous offer of a mere addition to my allowance. You must tell my father at once that I cannot accept it. I am seeking a house or a flat. I cannot live in an out-of-the-way region. I must have sufficient income to keep up a suitable establishment; just what a wife would claim who had been obliged to separate from her husband."

"I am afraid we can hardly expect your father to place you on that footing. Besides, my dear young lady, you are much too young for a separate establishment, even if it were worth while to make such an arrangement for the short time that will elapse before your own marriage."

"I do not know how long that time may be. It is impossible for me to leave England, or make new ties of any sort until I have completed this business."

"But surely Lord Monkchester will not approve of such a postponement, to say no more!"

"Lord Monkchester will see the matter as I do. His honour is quite as much concerned as mine. I certainly could not marry him with this cloud resting upon me. You must write again to my father, and make it clear. He does not seem to understand. In this, I suppose, you act for him, though you refuse to act for me. I am sorry, but it cannot be helped. Will you kindly find if my cab is waiting?"

In a few minutes she was closeted with Mr. Cullingworth, of Bedford Row. He was a young man, with an aquiline nose, and bright black eyes set closely on either side of it. He was immensely surprised and flattered when he found this magnificent young lady awaiting him in his room. So far his successes had been amongst thieves and murderers, and though he found it profitable work, as well as immensely exciting, and though he had attained to great distinction in his line, he sometimes pined for clients who might be cleaner and more prepossessing of appearance; for mysteries to unravel in gorgeous drawing-rooms and dainty boudoirs, not always in slums and jails; not for less wickedness, but for wickedness which had the gilt of rank and romance about it, and now, all unexpectedly, the longing of his heart seemed to be answered.

Who could this splendidly-beautiful young woman be, with the complexion of

a gipsy and the bearing of an empress? What was her story? Was it wrong or was it crime? What puzzled him was that it could not be divorce court business, since the card she sent in bore her name—"Miss Treverton"—printed under "Sir Everard Treverton." It was part of Helena's fierce protest against her father's marriage that she made a point of using these cards still, ignoring the existence of a step-mother.

Mr. Cullingworth bowed deferentially, with a smile meant to be as pregnant as Lord Bacon's nod, implying at once full comprehension of a delicate situation, respectful sympathy, and confident faith in the justice and ultimate success of the cause to be entrusted to him. Meantime, he was reading her countenance with keen, experienced eyes.

"She is capable of anything," he told himself. "She will be perfectly unscrupulous in carrying her point. She has the strongest possible passions, whether love or hate, and she will crush them under her foot with equal promptitude, rather than let them stand in the way of her resolute purpose. She looks like Lucrezia Borgia. If I ever allowed myself to guess, I should say it is jealousy and revenge that has brought her here. She has put, or tried to put, some one out of the way, and she wants me to get her off. She is not a common sort of woman, so far as feminine varieties go—which is not very far. They are all made of much the same stuff."

In spite of his experience and keen insight, she surprised him at once by showing herself to be more out of the common than any woman with whom he had had dealings. He was accustomed to a programme that never varied when the client was a woman, no matter what her class, or what her trouble. They all required a great deal of bringing to the point; they all began with hints, and excuses, and incoherent assertions of their deeply-wronged innocence; they all were carried away, no matter with how much self-control they began, to passionate, more or less irrelevant, accusation; they all contradicted themselves recklessly; they all shed tears; most of them went into hysterics; some of them fainted; they all expected him to fall in love with them on the spot, and so win his devotion; and they all used a thousand words where ten would have done.

Miss Treverton came to the point at once, and stated her case with clearness.

He listened attentively and silently. When she had finished, he said :

"You believe the marriage to be null and void, on the ground of incapacity on the part of one of the parties to make a legal contract ?"

"Incapacity !" Helena repeated, puzzled.

"Such as a previous marriage not lawfully dissolved. You have reason to suspect that the lady was not free to contract matrimony ?"

"There are plenty of grounds without that," returned Helena, impatiently ; "but no doubt there is a great deal in her antecedents, which you will find out, that would make her unfit to marry my father. I have been most careful in my enquiries in the neighbourhood, and I have made notes in my diary, which I have with me. I had better read them to you ; you could hardly find them, or understand them."

"I am afraid I shall have to ask you to give the diary into my hands if you wish your notes to be used as evidence."

"I can make extracts. Here is the first note. Miss Lyon evidently came to Oswaldburn under an assumed name, which she wrote both as Mrs. Lyon and as Miss Lyon. Mrs. Dudley and Mrs. Slater both told me this. Does not that prove her to be a married woman ?"

"Possibly a widow, if it is any sort of evidence at all," put in Mr. Cullingworth.

"Well, it really does not matter ; there are so many other pieces of evidence. She called regularly at Monkchester post office for letters addressed to Miss Laura Tigar—received, opened, and read them."

"That is rather a strong point," murmured the lawyer. "It is not evidence of incapacity to contract, but of insincerity and mystery."

"Then Mrs. Dudley, with whom she went to stay, and who chaperoned her in Paris, told me that no relations or friends were forthcoming at the wedding, and that everything was hurried over with the greatest secrecy. They were married in Paris. I know these foreign marriages are constantly being set aside."

"I fear this must have been too carefully managed for any such accident to have happened. The British Embassy, the chaplain, Sir Everard's knowledge of the world—I must confess, Miss Treverton, that so far you have given me no evidence, you have only told me of facts that

justify suspicion that there may be evidence somewhere. And Sir Everard, do you know of any incapacity on his side ?"

"Certainly not !" angrily ; then recollecting herself, "except that he acted in ignorance of all these facts ; he was infatuated—not responsible for his actions."

"Ah !"

"You think that is a good reason," she cried, eagerly. "I was told that it was worthless ; but you know best. He certainly acted under undue influence. He was bewitched, altered in every way."

"In what way ? Undue influence counts for nothing here. But you say he was altered—not responsible for his actions. When did you first notice a change ? Perhaps if you were to refer to your diary——"

"I did not mean to imply that he was insane," said Helena, startled and annoyed.

"You never suspected anything was wrong ? There was no mystery in his movements ; no incomprehensible change of plans ; all went on exactly as usual !"

"He did suddenly change his plan of going to Scotland," she said, thoughtfully.

"Can you not find in your diary some note of his state of mind about the time the affair must have been beginning ? What about this change of plans about Scotland ?"

Helena turned back the leaves of her diary, thinking deeply.

"I remember it was the day I was engaged to Lord Monkchester. Here is what I wrote : 'Papa changed his mind about going to Scotland, for no reason whatever. He seems cross and obstinate, like a person going to be ill. A great deal of unnatural excitement about him ; yesterday he was low and depressed. It looks like serious nervous derangement.'

"May I ask if he has ever suffered from temporary mental infirmity ?" cautiously.

"Been insane ? Good Heavens, no !"

"If we fail on other grounds, I think we might make something of a slight temporary aberration ; nothing serious, only sufficient to incapacitate him for the time of making a lawful contract."

Helena looked at him for a moment.

The lawyer said to himself : "She will shut her father up in a lunatic asylum rather than admit him to be married to this woman."

"There is no fear of our failing on other grounds," she said firmly, and she rose to finish the interview.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By RITA.

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Dorby and Joan," "Shaba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V. BITTER-SWEET.

THE spring passed, with swiftly-gliding step, into the bloom and richness of summer. Huel Penryth and I were again at M'Kaye's station, having visited Sydney and Melbourne in the meantime. But neither of us took kindly to civilised life and its exactions and artifices after our wandering and erratic existence. We had accepted an invitation to spend Christmas with the M'Kayes, and, accordingly, the twenty-fourth of December found us there. Great excitement prevailed in the family. It appears that the girls had at last persuaded their father to take them to the old country, and that they were to leave early in the ensuing year.

They were full of it. We heard nothing else discussed from morning till night. I cannot remember when the first hint or suggestion was thrown out that Huel and I should accompany them; but gradually we ceased to oppose or ridicule the idea, and came to discuss its probability together.

We had plenty of money—we had no ties to keep us here. The M'Kayes were urgent, and at last I found myself confessing that I would like to go back, if only for a short time. I had heard no news of my father since I left Scotland; that, of course, was my own fault. I had never written to any one to relate my escape from the wrecked vessel, and no doubt I was believed to be drowned.

It amused me a little to picture the

astonishment and consternation that might possibly ensue if I appeared in my birth-place in the new and important aspect of a wealthy man.

How readily my faults and escapades would be forgiven! How excusable they would look under the gilded cover of success! I laughed somewhat bitterly as I thought of it, and thought too, with a longing I hardly liked to acknowledge, of the girl whose soft eyes would once have given me so sweet a welcome.

Would she be much changed? Two years make a great difference in a girl's life, and marriage makes a greater.

Yet I could not picture her a woman. Always in my fancy she lived as the fairy-like, fragile little being whose wistful eyes had grown wet with tears when I had sung "Auld Robin Gray" that first night we met.

It annoyed me sometimes that I could not forget her. I had always found it so easy a matter to forget other women, but now, try as I might to convince myself that I was going home for a hundred different reasons, one lurked at the bottom of all, unacknowledged, but known to my own heart—I wanted to see her again. I wanted to know if she was happy—if she had quite forgotten me!

Whether the proceeding was unwise or not I did not argue. Once having consented to return I felt a sense of relief at my own decision, and as Huel was still to be my companion, I felt that I was leaving nothing to regret behind me.

I had grown strangely attached to this strange man. Perhaps he was not a very safe or a very good companion for me, especially in the impressionable stage of my life; but he had a force and originality of character which I liked.

It seemed strange to me that he had not made a mark in the world, with his many gifts and brilliant qualities. Perhaps that hidden spring of bitterness, cynicism, and disbelief had poisoned the sweeter currents of his nature, and now he took a morbid delight in denying all good in mankind, and upholding materialism as his god, and Nature as his religion.

He had not alluded again to that secret of mine which he had guessed when I heard the news of Campbell of Corriemoor's marriage. Only the night before we sailed, he said, abruptly:

"Your home is near Inverness, is it not?"

"Yes," I answered, wondering why he asked the question.

"And where is Corriemoor?" he continued, his eyes searching my face somewhat keenly.

"Oh," I said, with indifference, "that is a long, long way from my part of the country. Indeed, I have never even seen it."

"You know its owner, though?"

"Oh, yes," I said, "but not intimately. He was a great personage, and I a nobody."

"And he has married—married the girl whom you loved. I hope for her sake you will not meet."

He spoke moodily, abstractedly. I looked at him in surprise. I felt the colour rising to my face.

"Why do you say that?" I asked.

"Because I feel afraid of you, and because I once, long, long years ago, knew a man who, like you, threw away the treasure of a girl's love, and learnt too late the value of his loss."

"We are not likely to meet," I said, coldly. "Even if we were——"

"Oh," he said, with an odd flash in his dark eyes, "do not say that. It argues self-confidence, but not conviction. You have carried a sore heart about with you for many a long day. Your own folly may be to blame. I dare say it is; but do not fancy any obstacle or barrier that ever yet was set up has acted to men's passions as anything but an incentive. Love may die a natural death of weariness or disenchantment; but no power yet could kill it out of the heart where it had no right to live and no hope of attainment. To love greatly is to be very unhappy and very hopeless. What is refused to forgetfulness is only what man's vanity calls fidelity. Were memory curable, there would be no such thing."

"It is useless to argue with such an unbeliever as you are, Huel," I said, somewhat bitterly. "According to you, there is no good in anything or any one; no human sentiment worthy of praise, and no genuine feeling in man or woman, save only their love of self."

"Well," he said, coolly, "can you recall any historical or recorded instance of the 'divine passion' which has not been celebrated for its unhappiness, peril, or tragedy? Commonplace affections, I grant, may sail smoothly along the sea of individual existence; but I speak of love—that divinest, sublimest, sweetest, and most torturing of human passions. It is divine only so long as its object is surrounded by that halo of 'inaccessibility.' Stolen hours, silent dreams, impassioned longings—these alone invest it with the power to uplift our natures. We cease to idealise when we are forced to live the dreary commonplace of everyday life with that ideal. Habit is the death of romance, and romance is the life of love. The rose will not bloom when a slab of stone covers it. As the stone to the rose, so is the prose of accessibility to love."

"Then because this girl is lost to me by my own folly on the one side—by human laws of morality on the other—you fancy she will become doubly adorable?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"The veriest Phyllis of the fields becomes a goddess in the eyes of the Corydon who cannot win her. Could he do so, her fair skin would be black and blue with bruises ere six months of matrimonial bliss had flown!"

"Heresy—rank heresy," I said; "there are plenty of happy marriages in all ranks and grades of life. Naturally one's feelings can't be always at high pressure. But to love with reverence, and sympathy, and perfect comprehension is a very happy state of feeling."

"It is monotonous, and monotony is bound to become wearisome. Love has always been painted with wings; you cannot cage him without detriment to jailer or prisoner. Granted perfect liberty, passion may still be faithful; absence, variety, even pain, will keep it alive far longer than success. The mistake of love is that it is almost always unequal. If the woman loves more deeply than the man, she is exacting, jealous, unreasonable. If, on the other hand, his passion exceeds hers, he burdens her with equal exactions and suspicions. He repeats himself ad

nauseam, and she wearies. Not the sweetest song ever written but will pall by daily repetition. You will find I am right, the more you study human nature. The scales are almost always unevenly weighted—no two natures are exactly balanced—one is poor and light, the other deep and strong; one capricious, the other steadfast; one profound, the other shallow; one formed for truth, the other wavering and unreliable. For love to be equal, and that happens in one case out of a million, there must be the most perfect comprehension, the most exquisite sympathy; there must be a likeness yet a subtle variation between both natures; a charm which both recognise, and are wise enough to preserve without attempting to analyse its secret."

"What made you such a philosopher, Huel?" I asked, suddenly.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Observation, suffering, and necessity. How old should you think me, Douglas?"

I looked scrutinisingly at the calm face, the worn, lined brow, the dark, inscrutable eyes, the thick waves of hair, tossed so carelessly back above the leonine head.

"About thirty-five," I answered.

He smiled.

"No; I am forty-two by actual years, a hundred by experience and sorrow. Some day, perhaps, I will tell you my story; I have never breathed it to mortal yet. Confidence is a feminine attribute; men can exist and be perfect friends and companions, yet never exchange one thought or secret of their lives. Is that not true?"

"Perfectly true. I suppose we are enough for each other, without going into the background of previous events? Perhaps we are less exacting than women in friendship as in love."

He was silent; I saw the well-known look of gloomy absorption gather in his strange eyes; his memory had wandered back, no doubt, to that "background" whose shadows had darkened his life for many, many years. I had learnt by this time to understand his moods and respect his silence.

I said no more then; but my curiosity was awakened more keenly than it had ever been. What sorrow had so altered his nature and turned it to bitterness and hardness? What secret lay at the root of his apparent coldness and cynicism—his disbelief in all the softer or purer emotions that to most men make up the sum of life?

Had a woman's hand dealt the blow which had turned youth to age, and all the fresh, sweet currents of life to gall and bitterness?

Some day perhaps I should know.

CHAPTER VI. THE WEB OF FATE.

OF the voyage and its incidents there is no need to speak. It was monotonous, and fairly pleasant.

I could scarcely believe that two years had passed since I had travelled those same seas, and gazed on those same scenes. Two years! They seemed like twenty!

As we drew nearer and nearer to our destination, a strange nervousness overtook me; I avoided the M'Kayses—I could not bear the light chatter and incessant curious questioning of the girls; even Huel's companionship irritated me.

When the steamer reached Liverpool we separated. The M'Kayses were going first to London; but Huel and I had determined to travel on to Scotland at once.

We rested at Edinburgh, and I telegraphed from there to my father, informing him of my speedy arrival. I knew him well enough to feel assured the news would not excite or please him. I wondered whether he had believed me dead all this time.

It was while at Edinburgh that the first thought of Mrs. Dunleith flashed into my mind. Should I call and see whether she was at her old address? After all, I owed her some such attention, considering her interest in me, and the terms on which we had parted.

After dinner that night of our arrival, I asked Huel Penryth's advice on the subject, telling him frankly how matters had been between her and myself, and that she had furnished me with those letters of introduction to the people in Canada which I had lost in the shipwreck.

"I think it would be only polite of you to call," he said. "Suppose we stroll round there to-night? It is not a conventional hour for visiting, but possibly she will excuse that."

"I hardly think she will be in Edinburgh," I said. "Most probably she has left, or is travelling about; she never cared to stay long in one place. However, we will go and see for ourselves. You must come in and see her," I added; "I should like you to meet. She is a woman who has always puzzled me a great deal. I fancy she has had a very unhappy past.

She is reckless, but not bad. A very kind-hearted woman, but liable, I should say, to be led aside by impulse. Not a favourite with her own sex at all."

"I would rather not see her," he said; "I am no friend to the sex, as you know, and a woman of her type would be particularly obnoxious to me."

"But as a favour to me, Huel?" I urged.

He flashed a keen glance at me.

"Are you 'afraid of a tête-à-tête?" he said. "Well, a third person is decidedly a barrier to sentiment. But it will be trying, will it not?"

I laughed.

"For me, no. I had never any sentiment, as you call it, for her. She was one of those women who could be very good company to a man—smoke, drink, laugh, and jest—all 'à bon camarade,' but that was all."

"A widow, you said?"

"Yes. I never heard her say so, but indirectly she always led me to believe it."

"I think you were fortunate in escaping an entanglement," he said, abruptly. "She is the type of woman to be dangerous where her passions are concerned."

"Oh, there was nothing so serious as that," I said, lightly. "Her fancy for me was but a very light and passing one. Besides, I was a mere boy, years and years younger than herself."

"And you have not written or held any communication with her since you left home, two years ago?"

"No. Do you think it dangerous to resume the acquaintance?"

He shook his head doubtfully.

"I will go with you," he said, at last, "and I will see her before answering that question."

The moon was shining brilliantly over the picturesque extent of Princes Street as we left the hotel, and turned in the direction that had once been so familiar to me.

Huel Penryth stood silent for a moment, contemplating the scene with grave admiration.

Indeed, the scene was very beautiful. The gardens sloping to the bottom of the valley were full of lights and shadows; the opposite heights, crowned with the quaint houses of the old town, lost all the ugliness and gloom which the day's cruel candour would so plainly reveal. The famous Castle towered above on its rocky

perch, every turret and tower standing out distinctly in the pale, clear light.

"Most feudal castles are alike," said Huel, as we walked on; "but I grant this one of your capital is unique in its position. You have a background of park, hills, sea, and at your feet a town, modern as the veriest Phillistine could desire. Certainly it is very beautiful. I suppose you feel a Scotchman's pride in it all. For my part, I never could see why the mere fact of being born in a place invests it with a halo of superiority over all other places."

"Not superiority, only a deeper interest or attachment," I said.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I am too cosmopolitan for that, I fear. I suppose few places in the old country are more wildly and grandly beautiful than my old home on the Cornish coast; and yet I never care to revisit it."

We were opposite the Royal Institution, with its graceful twin structure, the National Gallery, breaking the sweep of the public gardens. How long ago it seemed to me since I had seen them. A strange chill touched my heart as involuntarily I paused and looked at them once more. A sense of impending trouble or misfortune, for which I could not account, left its cold pressure on brain and nerve, and seemed to warn me against the errand on which I was bent.

I shook off the feeling with an effort.

"Come, let us go," I said. "I am afraid we are very late for a call, as it is."

Mrs. Dunleith had rented a furnished flat when I had last stayed in Edinburgh; thither we now bent our steps. We toiled up the cold, white, general staircase, and rang at the third floor. To my astonishment the servant announced that Mrs. Dunleith was staying there, and was at home. She conducted us into a small ante-room, and left us there while she went to inform her mistress of my name.

Ere a moment had passed I heard an eager voice, the rustle of feminine skirts; then the door was thrown hurriedly open. A vision in pale amber silk, clinging in soft folds to the lissome, slender figure; dark eyes, eager, lustrous; white hands, outstretched; a well-known voice: "Douglas! can it really be you!" and then—

It was not my figure that rose to

welcomes her; it was not my face that turned her bright and eager one to cold-grey, death-like horror. It was not word or voice of mine that, with one single word, cut short her greeting. No, it was Huel Penryth's.

Swift as thought he had sprung forward and faced her, and she, meeting his gaze, seemed frozen into stony terror. I saw her shiver and recoil. I heard the low gasp of fear from her white lips. Then she staggered blindly forward and fell almost at my feet—senseless.

I raised her hurriedly and laid her on the couch. Huel stood there, motionless, his arms folded, his dark face set in hard and cruel lines.

"What is it?" I cried in astonishment.

"Do you know her?"

He looked steadily at the motionless figure, the white face, the closed eyes.

"To my bitter cost," he said.

CHAPTER VII. A DISCOVERY.

I HAD never seen on the face of any human being such an expression of hatred and contempt as that which flashed over Huel Penryth's usually calm, grave features.

I stood there silent and dismayed, as one feels in presence of some great tragedy. That he should have come from the end of the earth to meet the woman who had made life bitter to his youth!

Truly Fate works strangely. I looked from him to the white face and senseless form on the couch. Neither of us had made any effort to restore her senses. I was too startled, and he, I imagined, too embittered.

"What shall I do?" I said at last.

"Ring for her maid! Do you wish to stay?"

"I must speak to her," he said, abruptly.

"But for her own sake spare her the humiliation of your presence. Wait for me in the street below. I shall not detain you long."

I gave one more glance at that still and motionless figure, and then left them together.

Outside in the quiet street I paced to and fro for a long, long time. My thoughts were busy with conjectures. All the bitter speeches, the cruel truths, the unsparing sarcasms hurled at the sins and frailties of women by Huel Penryth came back to my mind.

And this woman was the cause!

Involuntarily I traced back my own

acquaintance with her. With calmer brain and more critical judgement than my hot youth had known, I went step by step along that path of seeming triviality which had ended now so strangely.

I remembered the subtle hints, the little bursts of mocking laughter, the fanciful caprices, the faint jealousies, the thousand and one arts and witcheries which this woman had used so unsparingly.

She had hated Athole Lindsay from the first, and I remembered the girl's sure instinct about her. Strange that women are so keen to detect a rival where a man's coarser nature sees no harm or danger.

A thousand things that she had said or insinuated respecting youthful love, boyish infatuation, the folly and imprudence of long engagements, the selfishness of early claims in face of more advantageous alliances—those spider-threads of mischief and malice which I could have once brushed away so easily, but which I had foolishly allowed to weave their web of entanglement and misunderstanding about me—all these came crowding back to my memory as I paced to and fro in the quiet moonlight.

Above my head the stars shone in the soft, blue arc of the heavens. The solemn beauty, the intense stillness seemed a rebuke to the stormy passions and cruel antagonism of men. I wondered what was passing between those two in the room above. Did Huel Penryth hide some brute element of jealousy and savagery beneath that calm exterior? The look that had flashed over his face when he saw Dora Dunleith had startled me by its revelation of fury and pent-up hatred. In that instant the man's real nature seemed to flash out in rebellion against long years of repression and restraint. The torments of a soul whose yearnings and faith had been pierced through and through by some sword of anguish had burst forth at last into outward expression.

I felt sorry for the woman who would wake from her sleep of unconsciousness and face at last the retribution of garnered years.

Sorry, and somewhat afraid, too, though I well knew Huel's extraordinary power of self-restraint.

How long he was—how long! He had told me to wait but a few minutes, and already half an hour had passed, and there was no sign of him.

Another quarter of an hour and still

I kept my lonely vigil in that street, and still Huel did not appear.

Wearied and disturbed, I had almost resolved on returning to the hotel, when at last he made his appearance.

I went eagerly forward, but the look on his face hushed the question on my lips. Its white savagery—the gleam of the dark eyes—the set, fierce sternness of the mouth, all spoke a tale of passion and wrath more plainly than any words.

He walked along by my side, apparently unconscious of my presence. From time to time his lips moved. Strange disjointed words fell from them.

“When a mortal delivers himself to the Powers of Darkness he yields the citadel of his being to the guard of its direct foes . . . I made the compact—to-night may set its seal . . . Why should I hesitate! Are they who rob human life less murderous than those who steal from mind and soul their youth, and faith, and purity! . . . ‘Avenge the evil’ they say to me; but how! Shall I take the life that is at my mercy, or spare it for further ill-doing! . . . Chaos, storm, darkness—my soul is engulfed in the maelstrom of its own passions. The voices I hear to-night are only those of fiends and tempters—”

“Huel,” I said, entreatingly; and laid my hand on his arm. He stopped and faced me abruptly.

“Is it you, Douglas!” he muttered, in a confused, dull manner.

I drew him into the quiet gardens, and still keeping my hold of his arm, besought him to calm himself. He lifted his hat and shook back the dark waves of hair from his brow with an impatient gesture.

“Calm, peace,” he muttered; “they are not for me; the moral harmony of my nature has long been turned to discord. I believe no good of man or woman. To-night a murderer’s soul is all that is left of me—all—all!”

“You! Oh! Heaven grant you have not killed the woman!” I faltered, in accents of horror.

The mockery of his harsh laughter fell on the still night air.

“My hands were at her throat,” he said. “I saw the black marks on the fair, white skin, that once, in youth’s madness, I had kissed with love’s wild rapture. . . Heaven, what fools men are! When shall we cease to deify these fair images of beauty, unknowing the whited sepulchres they are! Human animals, creatures of

prey, hiding under supple skin and velvet sheath the treachery that springs on its victim—the tiger-claws that wound them to the death. Like tiger and serpent, they ravage and destroy, and, like animal and reptile, they know no pity, and suffer no remorse!”

I let him rave on. I felt bewildered and alarmed at the sudden change in the cold, self-controlled being I had known so long. His wrath lived less in the spoken words he muttered than in the frenzied gleam of his flashing eyes—those portals to his strange nature—in the utter uprooting of all the strength and calmness that had so characterised his face.

I walked silently beside him, reflecting, with some irony, on the uselessness of man’s philosophy until he can assure himself he is utterly and entirely separated from earthly ties. Sorrow, treachery, misfortune will always find human soil for the sowing of their inexhaustible seed. He, a cold, dead tree of human life—proud of that very deadness, and vaunting its inability to put forth again one single shoot of love, or faith, or human desire—had yet regained through suffering the power of feeling; had not, even through years of abstinence and indifference, learnt to break those fibres of passion and pride which bind one nature to another, and connect their lives, actions, and desires with the intimacy of mutual interest and association.

“Where are we!” cried Huel Penryth, suddenly starting as one in a dream.

So absorbed had we been in our thoughts and emotions that neither of us had paid much heed to where our footsteps wandered.

When he spoke, we were standing on the summit of Arthur’s Seat, looking down from its height on the beautiful city below. The white splendour of the moonlight fell over dark Holyrood and the grim and dusky buildings of the old town. To the south-east the loch of Duddingston gleamed like a silver mirror, and the little village itself lay hushed and calm in the peace of the quiet night. The ruins of Saint Anthony’s Chapel stood out bold and clear on the broad shoulders of the hill; the sound of the water rushing from its spring in the rock behind the hermit’s cell was the only sound that disturbed the stillness.

We stood there and contemplated the scene for long, neither of us speaking.

At last Huel turned to me; a deep sigh, almost a groan, burst from his lips.

"Nature rebukes me," he said, his voice shaken and softened by intense feeling. "I hear her . . . I am calm once more. After all my lessons—after all my boasts—to think that I could be moved to such a display of evil feelings, and vengeful desires! But it is over now . . . The storm rages in a higher sphere, apart from physical wrath and vengeance. It is in my brain . . . A field of destroyed faith and dispelled illusions. I set myself apart from humanity long, long ago. Why did I suffer the memory of past wrongs to sting feeling to life again? . . . It was the struggle of philosophy against despair—no excuse, no reason, no argument. I have declared man to be master of Nature, and master of himself . . . Alas! how weak he proves when trial comes!"

He folded his arms across his chest, his head sank as if in sudden self-abasement. Wonderingly I had followed him through every phase of every changing mood—waiting patiently till passion should have exhausted itself, as, fortunately for humanity, all strong emotions must exhaust themselves in course of time. His face looked deadly pale as the moon-rays fell on it; the reaction of feeling centred itself now in a strange, almost pathetic humility of expression—the humility of a great strength finding itself but a great weakness. He who had ridiculed emotion as childish, need and fear as unphilosophical, had now experienced each in turn, and abandoned himself to their sway unresistingly.

He lifted his white face at last, and it looked almost unearthly in its solemn calm.

"It was Destiny," he said; "it could not be avoided. Listen, Douglas; for the first time in my life I unseal my lips, and give their secret to another. Perhaps, had your fate not linked itself with mine, your hand not led me to her presence, I should have never spoken these words. Seal them into silence; respect the weakness that made its vaunt so triumphantly only to know itself the sport and slave of temptation after all."

He drew me down on the rough stone beside which we stood, and there in the midnight solitude of the hermit's hill I heard the story of wasted passion and wilful wrong that had laid waste this strange man's life!

A REAL TREASURE-HUNT.

THE buried treasure on a desolate isle is a favourite theme in romance. Edgar Allan Poe was not the first, nor will Mr. Clark Russell be the last, to weave a moving story out of the secret of some practical hoard, and it cannot be denied that these stories had some substratum of probability in the old lawless days of buccaneering, and of conflict and plunder on the Spanish Main. There is still a pretty general belief that a good deal of riches yet lies hidden in the "cays" and islets of the Caribbean Sea—if one only knew how and where to look for it. Whether the game is worth the candle is open to some doubt, in view of the experiences of the gentlemen-adventurers who recently tried to unearth a vast hoard supposed to be buried in the island of Trinidad.

This is not the island of sugar and rum, whose tropical beauties have been so often described, but a lonely, rocky, almost inaccessible island in the South Atlantic, some seven hundred miles off the coast of Brazil. It is a sort of No-Man's-Land, although we believe somebody or other once annexed it in the name of Great Britain. It has never been occupied; and although there are upon it the remains of a Portuguese settlement, it does not appear that this was a permanent one. The probability, indeed, is that the Portuguese merely went there for temporary sojourn on the same errand as Mr. E. F. Knight and the crew of the "Alerte"—namely, to exploit the treasure.

In any case, it is unlikely that the island will ever be the subject of international disputes, since it is not only not worth having, but is a place to be carefully avoided. Surrounded by coral reefs and rugged crags, its iron-bound coasts are scathed in perpetual surf. In the best of weather there is only one moderately safe landing-place; but landing is for the most of the year quite impracticable. Up till the last ten or fifteen years it had been rarely visited, save by some belated vessel in search of water, or of green-stuff for a scurvy-stricken crew. For centuries it has been given over to the dominion of myriads of loathsome land-crabs and ferocious sea-birds. But within the last dozen years or so it has acquired a romantic sort of fame in the report of a great treasure said to have been buried

there about seventy years ago—a report which has induced six known, and probably several unknown, bands of adventurers to seek for fortune among the land-crabs.

This is the story of the island-treasure: A Newcastle mariner was in command of an East Indiaman from 1848 to 1850, and, as the China Seas were then infested with pirates, he carried a large crew and a few guns for defence. This necessitated also shipping four quartermasters, and one of these officers was a Russian Finn, who was popularly known on board as "the pirate," because of a deep scar across one cheek. This Finn was a good sailor, and gave such indications of education and knowledge of navigation that the Captain took a liking to him, and showed him many little special kindnesses. On the voyage from China to Bombay this man fell ill, and, on reaching Bombay, he had to be carried to the hospital. Finding himself dying, he sent for the Captain, to express to him the gratitude he felt for the kindness he had received, and to say that, in return, he wished to convey a valuable secret, insisting that there should be no auditors but the Captain himself. Then he asked for a parcel out of his chest, and out of this parcel he took a plan of the island of Trinidad, marked on a piece of old tarpaulin. Pointing to a mark on the plan, he said that there is buried an immense quantity of gold and silver plate and bullion, hidden in the year 1821 by pirates. The treasure was being conveyed in Spanish ships from the Cathedral of Lima and the Peruvian churches during the War of Independence, which ships were captured by pirates. The Finn was one of the members of the crew which captured the ship carrying the Cathedral plate and specie, which they buried on Trinidad until they could divide it with security. But they were all captured by the Spaniards, and hanged at Cuba—all but this Finn, who had kept the secret locked up in his breast until he confided it to the Newcastle Captain on his death-bed.

All this sounds very like the stereotyped romance, but it is literally true that the Newcastle Captain received the plan and the story substantially as here related; it is also true that a gang of pirates were executed at Cuba about the time indicated by the Finn; and it is matter of history that the Spaniards of Lima did clear out with all the treasure they could deport

when the War of Independence broke out. The value of the treasure in the fortress alone was estimated at six millions sterling by Lord Dundonald, who himself re-captured some of it in the Protector's yacht. Lima was once the richest city in Spanish-America, but its wealth was soon scattered, and has not yet been all traced. The coasts were infested by piratical craft, many of whom were afterwards captured with their plunder by Lord Dundonald, but some of which certainly escaped. The Finn's vessel was one of those that got away, and the question is: Where is its precious cargo now!

That question is what Mr. E. F. Knight sought to answer by a systematic quest. He had landed at Trinidad in 1881, during his famous "Cruise of the Falcon," and although he did not then know the story of the treasure, the observations which he made on the island led him to attach credence to the tale when he did hear it. Moreover, he saw the cause of the failure of previous enterprises—in one of which the son of the Newcastle Captain, who inherited the secret, took part. At any rate, as he had found a landing-place, which none of the others seemed to be aware of; as he had traversed the island and knew all its characteristics; and as he knew where to find water, and what stores and tools to take, he thought he would be able to unearth the treasure if it is really there. At the same time he was quite prepared for failure, since land-slips are constantly occurring on the island, and it was quite possible that some volcanic commotion might have obliterated the landmarks, and placed the hoard beyond redemption.

The first thing was to get a suitable vessel, small and of handy rig, so that she could go close in-shore, and be easily handled by two or three men while the rest were engaged in the hunt. A cutter-yacht of fifty-six tons, called the "Alerte," was purchased at Southampton, converted into a yawl, re-fitted to accommodate a sufficient number of persons, and loaded with extra water-tanks, a condensing apparatus and boiler, a whale-boat for landing in the surf, a complete set of boring apparatus, a hydraulic jack, portable forge and anvil, timber for shafting, and a proper assortment of picks, shovels, wheelbarrows, and other tools for the work of excavation. Two large tents were taken for camp on the island, wire-fencing to keep off the land-crabs, seeds of quick-growing vegetables, medical stores, fishing

tackle, and an ample assortment of tinned provisions, salt junk, and such like things.

Next as to the company. This was limited to thirteen, all told, namely: nine gentlemen-adventurers and four paid hands. Mr. Knight provided the vessel and stores, and each volunteer had to contribute a sum of one hundred pounds, and to undertake to work under Mr. Knight's directions. Each of these volunteers was to be entitled to one-twentieth of the gross proceeds of the adventure; and nobody seems to have considered the possibility of the Spanish Government putting in a claim for the Cathedral plate. Questions of ownership never do trouble those who go in search of buried treasure. The paid hands were not entitled to any share; but they received good wages, and knew that if the search proved successful they would be substantially remembered.

There was no lack of volunteers. A selection was made, which proved not altogether fortunate, for two of the gentlemen found the work so little to their taste that they forsook the ship at Bahia. Some of the paid crew, too, had to be discharged and replaced; but, with these exceptions, the company of adventurers got on well together, and worked cheerily and hopefully in their romantic but decidedly toilsome enterprise.

The "Alerte" left the Southampton Water on the last day of August, 1889, and after a call at the Salvage Islands—which lie between Madeira and the Canaries—to attempt to follow up some traces of a treasure said to have been buried there in 1804—it is wonderful how many of these stories there are!—but which they did not find, the yacht stretched across the Atlantic, and reached Bahia, in Brazil, on the second of November. Here a short stay was made, to await letters, and to take in fresh provisions; then a further delay was caused by the weather; but leaving Bahia on the fourteenth, the "Alerte" sighted the promised land of Trinidad six days later. And this is how it appeared to the eager eyes of the treasure-hunters:

"As we neared it, the features of this extraordinary place could gradually be distinguished. The north side—that which faced us—is the most barren and desolate portion of the island, and appears to be utterly inaccessible. Here the mountains rise sheer from the boiling surf, fantastically shaped, of volcanic rock; cloven by frightful ravines; lowering in

perpendicular precipices; in places overhanging threateningly, and, where the mountains have been shaken to pieces by the fires and earthquakes of volcanic action, huge landlips slope steeply into the yawning ravines—landlips of black and red volcanic débris, and loose rocks large as houses, ready, on the slightest disturbance, to roll down, crashing into the abysses below. On the summit of the island there floats almost constantly, even on the clearest day, a wreath of dense vapour, but rolling and twisting into strange shapes as the wind eddies among the crags. And above this cloud-wreath rise mighty pinnacles of coal-black rock, like the spires of some gigantic Gothic cathedral, piercing the blue southern sky. The loftiest peak is about three thousand feet above the sea; but on account of the extreme precipitousness of the island, it appears much higher.

"As a consequence of the recoil of the rollers from the shore, we found that, as we got nearer in, the ocean swell under us increased in height, and rose and fell in an uneasy, confused fashion. The breakers were dashing up the cliffs with an ominous roar, showing us that in all probability landing would be out of the question for the present. At the further end of the bay we saw before us the Monument, or Ninepin, as it is called in the chart—a stupendous pinnacle of basaltic rock, eight hundred and fifty feet in height, which rises from the edge of the surf, and is detached from the main cliffs. The scenery was indescribably savage and grand, and its effect was heightened by the roaring of the surf on the beach, and the echoes of it in the ravines, as well as by the shrill and melancholy cries of thousands of sea-birds, so unaccustomed to the presence of man that they came off the crags and flew round us in evident wonder as we sailed by, often approaching so close to us, that we could strike them with our hands."

A strange, uncanny place this, indeed, forbidding in all its aspects, threatening in its volcanic possibilities, and haunted by singularly malignant sea-fowl, which might almost be imagined to be the embodied souls of the departed pirates, jealously guarding their treasure. An island of mystery, of dismal, black rocks, interspersed with fire-consumed crags of strange red and copper hues; apparently an accursed spot, where nothing can thrive but the hideous and insatiable land-crabs, and

the voluble and unsociable sea-birds. Yet stay, there are turtles—turtles by the thousand, even by the million—of enormous size, and sufficient to form a perpetual prandial Paradise for a whole nation of aldermen.

Mr. Knight avoided the Pirate's Bay, but took his vessel to the landing-place of which he knew, where is a natural pier of coral, and where also is a cascade of water—an important consideration. The island is about five miles long, and about two miles broad at the widest part. It narrows towards the south-west, and at this end is the bay in which the treasure is supposed to be buried. The anchorage of the yacht was some two or three miles from this bay, and to reach it from the landing-place involved a walk over the mountains across the island and back again. This walk was undertaken by Mr. Knight and the Doctor by way of preliminary survey.

This was not an easy task, for one of the unpleasant peculiarities of this remarkable island is that it is rotten. There is no solidity anywhere, for the whole substance has been disintegrated by volcanic fires, and by the action of water. To walk over the mountains is to start miniature avalanches, and to run the risk of being precipitated with them. Thus there is a perpetual sense of insecurity, and an ever-present dread that some giant pinnacle will suddenly topple over.

Yet the scenery is grand and weird enough, with torn and jagged peaks, profound chasms, huge landslips of black rocks, red ashen slopes, and an awful forest of dead trees. This last is one of the most remarkable features of Trinidad. Over the whole of the island, from the beach to the summit of the highest mountain, extends this forest of dead wood—trees strewn as closely as it is possible for trees to grow, once evidently a magnificent forest, but all as if plague-stricken at one blow. There is no record of the catastrophe which destroyed this immense vegetation, but it was probably some volcanic eruption. The trees have been known as they are for sixty years at least, although there is reason to believe that in 1700, at any rate, Trinidad was leafy and verdant. The wood is not all rotten, though the trees are dead; some of it is gnarled and knotty, very hard and heavy, of a dark reddish colour and close grain. It seems to belong to the family of pimento and rose-apple, so that it is probable that this dismal, forbidding, and ghastly island was once a garden of fruit and spices.

Vegetation, however, is not all dead, for in some of the gullies are picturesque tree-ferns, and on the plateaux there is a generous growth of beans, which the adventurers found extremely useful. Indeed, at one part on the high ground is quite a beautiful garden throned in a wilderness of rocks.

So much has been said of the land-crabs, which swarm over the island in incredible numbers, that we cannot do better than give Mr. Knight's own description of them. "I have seen them," he says, "two or three deep in shady places under the rocks; they crawl over everything, polluting every stream, devouring anything—a loathsome lot of brutes, which were of use, however, round our camp as scavengers. They have hard shells of a bright saffron colour, and their faces have a most cynical and diabolic expression. As one approaches them, they stand on their hind legs and wave their pincers threateningly, while they roll their hideous goggle-eyes at one in a dreadful manner. If a man is sleeping or sitting down quietly, these creatures will come up to have a bite at him, and would devour him if he was unable for some reason to shake them off; but we murdered so many in the vicinity of our camp during our stay on the island that they certainly became less bold, and it seemed almost as if the word had been passed all over Trinidad that we were dangerous animals to be shunned by every prudent crab. Even when we were exploring remote districts, we at last found that they fled in terror, instead of menacing with their claws."

The overland route to Treasure Bay was dangerous and arduous; but the site of the supposed wealth was reached at last, and preparations were made for a start. The pirate had described a gully in the middle of the bay, at the foot of which the gang had erected three cairns to serve as landmarks. Two previous explorers had reported the existence of the cairns and the gully; but one of them, for purposes of his own, had destroyed the cairns. Their original situation, however, was known, and it was supposed that the plunder had been buried under a hollow rock in the ravine. This ravine Mr. Knight now found, as he had expected, filled up by a landlip of red earth. Near this lay a small trench, and some old tools—all that remained of the operations of an expedition sent from the Tyne some years previously.

The work looked difficult, but not more

so than they had anticipated. The ravine must be cleared of the fallen earth, and digging must be continued until the cave was found. This involved the removal of some thousands of tons of matter and the toil of many weeks; but for that they were prepared. A site, therefore, was selected for a permanent camp, and with much labour and danger the needful tools and stores were landed in boat-loads from the yacht. The Doctor superintended the work on shore, while Mr. Knight and a couple of hands remained on board to take charge of the vessel—an anxious task, for the wind eddies fearfully and uncertainly from the mountain-passes even while all is calm out at sea.

The process of landing was exciting, if risky. "Every one knows how the ocean swell proceeds in regular rhythm, and how one sees at intervals three greater waves than usual come up, one after the other, to be succeeded by a comparative calm. We took the boat just outside the outer breakers and awaited one of these smooths. Soon three great waves passed under us and broke beyond us with terrific force. Now was our time, and we made a dash for it. The long ash oars bent as the men, putting their backs into their work, drove the boat through the sea. Pull away, pull away! The first row of breakers is passed, then we are safely borne on the top of the second, looking down upon the beach as from a hill. It passes us and breaks. All safe, so far. We are close to the beach. Then behind us we see a wall of water suddenly rise, curling over. We should simply be rolled over if we tried to back the boat against it, so the men strain at their oars to reach the shore before it. The boat is just touching the sand, the order is given, 'All hands overboard to haul her up!' when the sea pours over our heads. The men leap or are washed overboard. One catches hold of the long painter we had provided in view of such an emergency, and contrives to reach the shore; then, planting his heels in the sand, he holds on with all his strength, to prevent the boat being swept off into deep water by the receding wave. At first the other hands are out of their depth, but as the roller recoils they feel bottom; then two of us holding on to one side of the boat, and two on the other, while the remaining man scrambles on shore to assist the man with the painter, we haul the boat up till she grounds; then we stand by till the next roller comes on to

help us on a bit further. Here it comes! right over our heads, and we are afloat once more. But the two men on shore haul away with all their might, as do the others when they touch bottom; and when the wave recoils it has left us fifty feet higher up the bank, and out of reach of any heavy body of water."

It required several such exploits to land all the implements and stores, and then no time was lost in getting to work. A huge trench was dug, and for three months the party on shore laboured like navvies, ceasing only during the violent tropical heat of mid-day and on Sundays. When the weather permitted, visits were exchanged between the parties ashore and afloat, and variety was obtained by changing the assortment now and again.

At last the supply of oatmeal and fresh provisions ran low, and Mr. Knight, with three hands, made a voyage to Bahia for supplies, leaving the others at work. He was detained by bad weather, and when he reached the island again, he found his comrades on the verge of starvation, and discussing the advisability of launching their boat and taking to sea, in the belief that some accident had happened to the yacht.

In fine, the treasure was not found, although the ravine was thoroughly and most systematically explored. The golden candlesticks of the Cathedral of Lima were not destined to adorn the homes of the gentlemen-adventurers of the "Alerts," whatever may have become of them. Experiments were made in other likely places also, but no sign of the hoard was discovered. So leaving behind them immense mounds of displaced earth, and all the evidences of extensive mining operations, the party finally left the island on the fourteenth of February, 1890, for the Trinidad of happier repute in the West Indies. This voyage of nearly three thousand miles was safely completed, the men were paid off, the yacht was laid up, and the principals took mail steamer for England.

Thus ended one of the most determined, practical, and yet romantic and intensely interesting treasure-hunts on record; as full of incident and excitement as any ever conceived by the writers of sea romance. It ended in nothing but experience of a strangely weird and mysteriously grand fragment of Creation; but Mr. Knight has not abandoned his belief in the original existence of the treasure. Whether it has been removed

by some previous explorers, or whether it still lies buried beneath millions of tons of irremovable material displaced by eruptions, or whether some link is wanting in the chain of directions, remains a mystery. And it is likely to remain unsolved, after the experiences of the "Alerte" expedition.

ON THE JURY.

It came by post, and was at first mistaken for a circular, and had a narrow escape of the waste-paper basket. But something peculiar in its appearance caused it to be opened, when the head-line, "In the High Court of Justice," gave the opener a bad quarter-of a minute. So that, after all, there was relief, as well as chagrin, in the discovery that "it," after all, was only a jury summons, "to be and appear in Her Majesty's said Court in the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand." There is even a crumb of comfort in that last clause. "In the Strand" has a cheerful, familiar appearance. It might have been for the Central Criminal Court, with gloomy Newgate close at hand, and its terrible hanging shed, with perhaps a murder case to give a horrible significance to the proximity; or, otherwise, to no less gloomy Clerkenwell, with its procession of the saddest and most forlorn of human creatures, who stand for a moment in the dock, and vanish into outer darkness. But there is nothing lugubrious about the Law Courts, except to persons cast in damages or costs. Their executions only extend to the means by which you live; and they have nothing to do with jailers or prisoners, unless, indeed, under writ of "Habeas Corpus," and that, as everybody knows, is a highly respectable proceeding, connected in some way with Magna Charta and our glorious Constitution.

Well, here we are, anyhow, landed, in the clear shining of a doubtful morning, in all the roar and bustle of the Strand, and yet a little apart from it, standing under the lofty public entrance to the Law Courts. Old St. Clement's Church looks quaint and shrunken in contrast with the huge bulk of the towering walls that surround us; and the modest chime from its steeple is overpowered by the sonorous clang from overhead, where the big clock is striking ten. We are a somewhat discontented company gathered in this Gothic

porch. Some of us would like to know the meaning of being brought here, to the detriment of business and the general derangement of our affairs; but as there is nobody present to throw any light upon the subject, our feelings are repressed to await a more convenient opportunity, and there is a general move into the great hall, where we feel so small, and insignificant, and altogether lost in its vast amplitude, that we are glad to seek direction to the Court for which we are summoned. There are gloomy arches to pass under, and cold stone steps to be encountered, and a general dungeon-like feeling is experienced, due to the massive mediæval character of our surroundings. But the Court itself is tolerably warm and comfortable. The Court is still almost empty; the only horsehair wig to be seen is that of the Clerk to the Court, who is busily arranging his papers. Now is the time for excuses. Jurors' wives and daughters are seen on the floor of the Court, to whom the horsehair wig courteously inclines, with a pleasant, yet incredulous twinkle about the eyes—not that the wig has eyes, but the meaning is obvious. "I shall protest," said one of us, indignantly, coming up the stairs. But he did not protest; instead, he very meekly asked for a day off, on the ground of urgent private affairs, and got it. Altogether, the impression received is that there is no particular Rhadamanthine sternness about attendance, and that one can get his turn postponed for sufficient cause; but, as one must serve sooner or later, it is best to get it over, like a visit to a dentist. So, without more ado, the little crowd of jurors seat themselves upon the benches that rise up behind the double row of seats provided for counsel.

There is now a buzz of movement in the Court. Lawyers' clerks, with bundles of papers, appear and disappear. The outer bar shows a row of wigs and gowns. Many are the greetings and recognitions, for this is practically the first day of term after the long vacation. The faces under the grey wigs are ruddy and bronzed, the talk is of rod and gun, of river and mountain. Here is the man who killed the deer, yonder he who landed the twenty-pound salmon; and we may hear in snatches about Switzerland, Montenegro, Cornwall, California—buzz, buzz—over which rises a sonorous voice:

"Gentlemen of the jury, answer to your names, and take your places in the box."

After all, it is something of a lottery,

this jury business, and a few of the more knowing ones have quietly slipped out and gone about their own concerns. For if a man is not there when his name is called, somebody else takes his place; for there are, perhaps, fifty of us waiting here, of whom not more than four-and-twenty can be wanted at any one time. Still, there is a certain amount of risk in such a pardonable evasion, for in a law court it is always the unexpected that happens, and if it came to pass that a jury was wanted and could not be made up, then there would be a general call of the muster-roll, and absentees without leave would be fined twenty pounds, perhaps, or even more heavily, and would have to go down upon their very marrow-bones to beg themselves off, and possibly even then would be made victims of, to encourage the rest.

But being called, and having answered to his name, the juryman's fate is fixed for the time. He leaves his brethren of the panel—we are all the panel—which may be defined as the wooden adornment of a court of justice; he takes his seat in the jury-box—a seat of excellent and well-polished oak, but somewhat hard, and straight in the back. "If this is the Queen's Bench," remarks a ponderous juryman, sotto voce, "I think she might allow us cushions." As everybody else is talking, the jury talk too, and the buzz, buzz becomes more loud and accentuated, when suddenly it is checked. No, that is not the judge, but his attendant, with his law-books and note-books, which he arranges upon his lordship's desk, reminding one of a Scotch kirk when the minister is coming in.

But now, "Silence!" The buzz ceases altogether as a curtain is held back, all rise to their feet, and Mr. Justice Dry enters, in a round, soft wig, in bands, and rustling robes, who bows on either side and takes his seat. "Blake against Hake," cries the officer of the Court; but before Blake and Hake can set-to, half-a-dozen barristers jump up and address "me lud," one after the other. Somebody wants to be postponed. Here there may be the case of a witness who has the influenza, with a doctor ready to swear that it will endanger his patient's very existence to come into Court, while somebody else makes out that this is only a pretext for delay. When these amiable squabbles are settled, it turns out that Hake and Blake have, with tardy wisdom, settled also. One or two other cases also vanish into

thin air. Faint hopes arise in the juryman's breast that he will be let off perforce, for want of something to try. But the teeth of the legal millwheels, which have been thus racing through a lot of empty chaff, bite into solid grist at last; and in "Slack versus Black" the jury is sworn. There is a general meeting of thumbs over the three Testaments that a liberal administration provides for swearing purposes. And now, surely, we shall begin. But there is a slight hitch. "Mr. Whittiker has been sent for, me lud; I expect him every moment." Thus explains the junior in the case, embarrassed by the absence of his leader. "Go on; couldn't be in better hands," says the judge, affably, as regards the junior, over whose face passes a flush of gratified emotion. But just at that moment Mr. Whittiker rustles in, seizes the heads of the case in a half-minute's colloquy with his junior, and proceeds to explain everything to the jury, in his usual clear and graphic manner.

Perhaps the case of "Slack versus Black" is one that, in newspaper language, presents no features of public interest. It does not bring the reporters into their box, which is just opposite our box. There is only one gentleman there, trimming his nails, who seems to regard our case with languid indifference. Nor does the case bring any crowd of people to the Court. There is a public gallery up aloft, reached by winding stairs, and steep, narrow passages, from a turret door that opens upon the Strand. That people should go through all the trouble to reach this gallery, in order to hear the case of "Slack and Black," is indeed amazing. But they do; there is always a sprinkling of people there to represent that great public in whose face all our justice is administered. Unfortunately for that section of the public which visits our Court, the only thoroughly efficient means of ventilation is to keep the doors of the public gallery wide open. That way, there is no doubt about the ventilation—you can feel it circling in every corner. Our judge seems to enjoy a draught; what he cannot endure is anything in the way of heat. So that, when the old gentleman with asthma and bronchitis in the gallery sily and on tiptoe closes the door behind him, our judge spots him in a moment, and sends the usher panting up to those high regions to keep the doors open.

"Slack versus Black" comes to an end at last, the contradictory witnesses have

been heard, counsel have had their say, the judge has put the case in a nutshell, the jury are agreed, and all this before two o'clock. As soon as the verdict is delivered the usher hands to the jury the sum of twelve shillings—one apiece all round. It is "trink geldt," no doubt, a "pourboire," something to spend as we go home; for it is Saturday. The Court is joyfully rising, with a warning to jurors to present themselves on the Monday morning at 10 15; and so, like school-boys just released, we clatter down once more into the great hall.

But it is raining hard. What a sight is the Strand, reflecting gleams of brightness, and its banks of tall houses, just like a river! How hollow sound the wheels of the cabs as they are driven at full speed! how dull the roll of the omnibuses, all full inside! what argosies of umbrellas, nearly all sailing westwards! Here, held in this net of thin but strenuously driving rain, are caught all the outpourings from the Courts: plaintiffs and defendants huddled together in common misfortune; my lady from the Court of Matrimonial Causes, my lord who was her husband yesterday, but who to-day has been severed by rule nisi from the bonds of matrimony—they can talk together now like chance acquaintances, and discuss the weather. There are counsel, too, tucking up their skirts, and making a rush for the Temple; cabs hurry up, and have piles of papers and records shot into them. Here is a pleasant family party—handsome girls, tall youths, and dignified pater—all come up about a will case, and enjoying it to the uttermost. Cabby knows his quarry, and bears down from all sides upon the Law Courts; but he is wanted everywhere to-day, and knows his value, while some of these legal gentlemen are so full of law that they will only pay legal fares. But soon the crowd clears away. The halls of justice are deserted, the attendants are locking up and going away; only the solitary policeman is left. There is nothing for it but a dash down Essex Street in the pouring rain—swept down it almost in the rush of streaming waters—and so to the underground train, abused at other times, but on days like this a veritable friend in need.

But on fine mornings our juror, getting accustomed to his work, takes a different route altogether. To make acquaintance with the town an hour or two earlier than usual is really a pleasant experience, espe-

cially as the way may bring him into regions hitherto but imperfectly known. There are fine crusted slums eastward of Drury Lane upon which one casually touches, and there are streets, once genteel and rather fashionable, which seem devoted to the votaries of Covent Garden Market. Here you meet the West End flower-girls, laden with fresh chrysanthemum blooms, with ferns and foliage, all in market bundles, presently to be arranged in coquettish, enticing button-holes, and all for a penny. Every retreating corner is a stand for costers' barrows, and from the old-fashioned doorway, leading into its panelled hall, issues the coster himself, with bundles of vegetables in his arms. Up this street a kind of pony market is held, where a half-gipsy coster runs his pony up and down before an intending purchaser, while a comrade wakes the echoes with his cracking whip to make the affair go off with more spirit. Then you come to old Sardinia Street, with its chapel still of note, and through the archway, reverberating with the clatter of the passing cabs, into Lincoln's Inn Fields; you may remember the inextricable labyrinth of courts and alleys, and miserable blind streets that stretched from here to the Strand.

You may have seen the slums gradually melting away under the pickaxe and hammers of the destroyers. Some three hundred and eighty-five houses were destroyed, and four thousand inhabitants were turned out of their wretched homes. They were treated liberally, by the way, and treated each other liberally, till the money was all spent. And over the ground once occupied by all this rookery was spread a solid foundation of cement covering a space of six acres, while the whole building occupies an area of upwards of eight acres. And you may have seen the great, bare place under its hoardings. There are hoardings still about the place, and runs and passages among them known only to law clerks and policemen.

Being on this side of the Courts, our best entrance is the one in Carey Street; not the one reserved for the judges, but the general one for counsel and solicitors. But notice the hurry-scurry that sets in across Lincoln's Inn Fields as the hour approaches when the Courts begin to sit. Bedford Row cum Bloomsbury sends its clouds of solicitors and solicitors' clerks, horse and foot—and artillery, too, in the form of huge rolls and plans, and por-

tentious deed-boxes. Cabs drive up, too, with fresh-looking country clients, and stout solicitors, with benchmen of the country kind in charge of great bags full of papers. Here is a regular procession of carriages with the whole municipal staff of Great Muggleton, for that famous appeal case, the Mayor and Burgesses and others, appellants, versus the Commissioners of Muggleton Harbour, respondents. And here are the Commissioners themselves, with an old sea captain or two among them. And the timid young lady with her mother and aunts is the plaintiff in a breach of promise case.

It is a veritable *débâcle* of all the overflow of the assizes and *Nisi Prius*, all swirling as if into the drain-trap—that trap being the Royal Courts of Justice; and within the building, along those modern-mediæval, gloomy corridors, the rout and rush is still continued, with a strong mixture of wigs and gowns among the crowd. But it soon ceases, as the various groups are drawn into the different Courts, and then there is plenty of room to move about at leisure. Entering from Carey Street, you are at once on the higher level of the Court corridors—higher, that is, compared with the great hall, and the floor of that is considerably above the general level of the Strand—and by these corridors you can complete the whole circuit of the building, and approach all the public Courts of Justice. And at either end they afford a fine view of the great hall, which, in all this bustle, has been quiet and almost deserted; so that this fine feature of the Courts is, for any purposes but those of show or pageant, completely out of any practical use. One cannot help sighing for the lost opportunity of the fine characteristic scene that this hall might have witnessed under more happy architectural arrangements, and something of regret for the fine stirring scene presented by old Westminster Hall when the Courts were sitting there.

But presently the juror is in his accustomed seat. Probably he is not called into the box to-day, and enacts the part of panel in the same patient spirit that one enacted Wall in the drama of "Pyramus and Thisbe." Yet are the cases often interesting, even if they do not appear in the daily papers. What strange characters come to the surface! what curious incidents are brought to light! Dramatic effects, too, come out in cross-examination; and often the whole interior

movement of some strange phase of life is revealed in strong, unstudied phrases.

At half-past one the judge looks up with a twinkle in his eye: "Now let's go to lunch." If we did not go, it is doubtful whether the proceedings would be audible, from the tramp and turmoil in the corridors; for all the Courts rise just now for refreshment, and the scene of the morning is renewed with even more vigour and entrain. And now the refreshment bars are at work—institutions that modify the awful associations of Justice and endow her with more cheerful and hospitable attributes. There are dining-rooms for those who have leisure for a square meal. But of all these arrangements the oyster bar seems the most popular. The junior barrister has a natural taste for oysters, and the little pendulums at the back of his wig may be seen to wag with the fervency of the beards of old, when it was merry in hall. But municipal dignitaries are also good oyster eaters. The Mayor of Great Muggleton empties many a shell, the aldermen follow suit, and the Harbour Commissioners are not far behind.

But we poor jurors may look back with sentimental regret to a period

When wretches hang that jurymen may dine.

Nobody suffers for our entertainment. A mouthful of fresh air is all that the Queen's Bench can afford us. There is no more exchequer, alas! and that shilling was long ago spent.

When the Court resumes, it is, perhaps, with a case that is evidently set, and likely to last out the sitting; and then the rest of the panel are told they may go. And they do go, without waiting to be told a second time. When the clatter of retreating footsteps has ceased, the case goes on at its slow, methodic pace.

At some time or other in the course of his week's experience the jurymen will probably find that the questions left to the jury are not to be settled by a hasty confabulation in the box. The jury must retire. The Usher of the Court is forthwith sworn as their guardian; there is a special door for their exit, a special region—cold, forlorn, and comfortless—that they must traverse, down flights of dismal, echoing stairs, down into the very bowels of the earth. And then the usher introduces the jury into the freezing-room. That room strikes cold to the heart as you enter it. It resembles a swimming-bath with the water let out; but there seems

to be no security that it will not come in again. A feeble kind of daylight filters in from above, but there are no sounds of life to be heard; the skylight, or whatever the light may be, evidently opens into some deserted courtyard in the very heart of the building. And the iron door slams to, and you are left locked up in this terrible cold chamber. Even in writing of it one begins to shiver.

The only means of communication that we have with the outer world is the button of an electric bell inscribed "Usher." That button is only to be touched when we are all agreed. Don't let us be obstinate, my friends, in our individual opinions, but let us agree as soon as we can, so that we may sound that blessed signal of release.

And now the buried alive return to the warm earth. While we have been dead the world has gone on as usual. Another jury has been sworn, another case drags its slow length along. But we have one moment in which we feel ourselves of real importance. The usher calls out before us, "Jury!" and as we enter the Court all business ceases, and everything is left just as it stands while we, the twelve, with the fate of who can say how many lives on our consciences, are drawn up on the floor of the Court. "How say you now, gentlemen of the jury! Are you all agreed?" "We are." "And you find for—?" "Well, never mind what our verdict was. Anyhow, it was a just one, although, as your juror recalls the circumstances under which it was arrived at, like Harry Gill,

His teeth they chatter, chatter still.

And it proved to be our last, for soon after came the welcome announcement that "jurors are discharged from further attendance."

BREACH OF PRIVILEGE.

IN recent sessions of Parliament the question of breach of privilege is one that has somewhat frequently been raised in some form or other in the House of Commons. It is only intended, however, to deal here with the more remarkable cases that have occurred from time to time in Parliamentary history.

Instances of proved breach of privilege, in modern days, are somewhat rare in comparison with the many cases recorded in the earlier years of Parliamentary history. The late Sir Erskine May, the

eminent authority on Parliamentary procedure, defines a breach of privilege to be "a wilful disobedience to the orders and rules of Parliament, or insults and obstructions offered to it in the exercise of its constitutional functions." He further brings the offences under four distinct heads:

1. Disobedience to general orders or rules of either House.
2. Disobedience to particular orders of various kinds, as for the attendance of persons before the House, the production of papers, records, etc.
3. Indignities offered to the character or proceedings of Parliament by libellous reflections, etc.
4. Assaults or insults upon members, or reflections upon their character and conduct in Parliament, or interfering with officers of the House in the discharge of their duty.

It is not of course possible, within the limits of a magazine article, to enumerate all the cases of breach of privilege coming under the four heads given, but in selecting, as far as possible, in the order given, the most interesting, one cannot fail to observe how severe, nay, cruel, was the punishment awarded for this offence in the earlier years of Parliament compared with that meted out in the present day. As a matter of fact the practice in recent years has been simply to commit the offender to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, or to Newgate, where he is kept until due submission is made and the House resolves that he be discharged.

Palgrave says that the reprimand of an offender at the bar is an occasion of much solemnity, and, in order to convey to the reader some idea of its character, it may be well to quote the words used by Mr. Speaker Abbot when, in 1805, he was called upon by the House to reprimand the Sheriffs of Middlesex for some malpractices committed by them in connection with an election over which they had presided. The offenders, standing at the bar of the House, the Serjeant-at-Arms, mace in hand, by their side, were addressed as follows: "Because you have, in defiance of the law of this country, knowingly and wilfully violated at once the privileges of this House and the just constitution of Parliament, you are committed to the jail of Newgate, the common receptacle of all malefactors, there to remain a prisoner, a signal proof of the power and justice of this House, an indelible disgrace upon you and a memorable example to others."

Formerly it was the practice to make offenders receive judgement kneeling at the bar. In both Houses, however, the practice has for some time been discontinued, owing, it is said, to the refusal of a Mr. Murray to kneel when brought up to the bar of the House of Commons, in 1750; for which refusal he was declared "guilty of a most high and dangerous contempt of the authority and privileges of the House." In connection with this requirement, an amusing instance is recorded in the following year, of one Crowle, an attorney, the ringleader of some serious election riots at Westminster in that year, who, having been summoned before the House of Commons, was commanded by the Speaker to kneel, and having been duly reprimanded, rose, and wiping his knees exclaimed that "he had never been in so dirty a house before."

In explanation of some of the cases here cited, it may be well to state that in both Houses a Standing Order exists which declares that "it is a breach of privilege for any person whatsoever to print, or publish in print, anything relating to the proceedings of either House." Practically these orders have long since fallen into disuse, and it is only when debates are reported "ma'â fide" that the question of "breach of privilege" is raised. Thus, so far back as the reign of Henry the Seventh the journals of the House of Commons record the severe punishment meted out to a Member for having divulged the debates of the House; for which offence he was committed to the Tower, and both he and his posterity were by an Act debarred from ever sitting or serving as a representative of any place whatever. Similarly in the reign of Elizabeth, for having published the debates of the House, a Member was committed to the Tower for six months, fined five hundred pounds, and expelled the House. Again, in 1801, it is recorded that Allan Macleod was fined one thousand pounds, and committed to Newgate for six months, for publishing certain paragraphs purporting to be a report of some proceedings of the House which had been ordered to be expunged from its journals. For publishing and vending these paragraphs, John Higginbottom was at the same time fined six shillings and eightpence, and committed to Newgate for six months. In the same year we find, in the House of Lords journals, the printers of "The Morning Herald" committed to the cus-

tody of "Black Rod," for printing and publishing, in that journal, an account of a debate which the House declared to be "a scandalous misrepresentation." In connection with offences of this description, a ludicrous incident is reported of an Irish Member of the House of Commons having made a speech in which some peculiar passages occurred. These the reporter italicised. The Hibernian Member having raised the question of "breach of privilege," the printer of the paper in which the speech was reported was called to the bar, and offered to prove that the report was an exact transcript of the Member's words. "That may be so," said the offended Member, "but did I spake them in italics?"

Under the third head, numerous cases of interest are recorded. Thus, in 1559, is chronicled in the House of Commons journals the case of W. Thrower, who was committed to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms for "a contempt in words against the dignity of the House." As was the case with the Archdeacon of Bath, who, in 1643, was similarly dealt with for "abusing the last Parliament."

From the House of Lords journals of 1621 we learn that one Floyde, for having scoffed at the son-in-law and daughter of James the First, was adjudged by the House to have committed a breach of privilege, and was sentenced to the following severe punishment:

1. Not to bear arms as a gentleman, nor be a competent witness in any court of justice.
2. To ride with his face to the horse's tail to the pillory, to stand therein, and to be branded with the letter "K" on his forehead.
3. To be whipped at the cart-tail.
4. To be fined five thousand pounds.
5. To be imprisoned in Newgate for life.

It is not clear why Parliament considered this case as one of breach of privilege; but, judging by the cruel punishment awarded, the offence was no doubt deemed to be of a flagrant character.

In the same journals for the year 1756, for publishing a spurious and forged printed paper purporting to be the King's speech, one King, it is stated, was fined fifty pounds, and committed to Newgate for six months.

In the year 1780, the personal quarrel of two Peers seems to have assumed such importance as to have caused the House of

Lords to deal with the matter as a breach of privilege. It would appear that the Earl of Pomfret, supposing a gamekeeper whom he had dismissed for some misconduct had been countenanced by the Duke of Grafton, wrote some very angry letters to his Grace, insisting upon fighting him with sword or pistol. The matter coming before the Lord Chancellor, both parties were required to attend in their places in the House, and, each having been heard, Lord Pomfret was adjudged to have been "guilty of a high contempt of the House," of which decision he was informed, while standing at the bar, by the Lord Chancellor.

As late as the year 1834 is a record of the case of the editor of "The Morning Post," who, for publishing in that paper a paragraph reflecting upon the conduct of Lord Chancellor Brougham in the discharge of his official duties, was committed to the custody of "Black Rod."

The well-known case of Sir Francis Burdett, who was sent to the Tower for a libellous "scandal upon the just rights and privileges of Parliament," needs but mention here on account of its historical interest.

The earliest offence coming under the fourth heading appears to be that which occurred in the reign of Henry the Eighth, in which a Member of the House of Commons was arrested for debt, and committed to prison. The House, on learning the fact, sent their Serjeant-at-Arms to demand their Member. The Serjeant, in executing his orders, met with resistance, his mace being broken and his assistant knocked down. As a consequence, the Sheriffs of London and those concerned in the arrest, were brought before the House, when some were committed to the Tower and others to Newgate, where they remained until released upon the Lord Mayor's petition.

As an instance of the somewhat arbitrary power exercised by Parliament in former years, may be cited the Aylesbury Election case of 1703. It would appear that a Mr. Ashby brought an action against the returning officers, constables, etc., of the borough for not receiving his vote. The House of Commons, considering the interference of a court of law in a question concerning the right of election as a breach of their privilege, ordered all the parties concerned therein, counsel, attorney, and others, to be taken into custody. Lord Chief Justice Holt was also ordered to

attend the House, but disobeying the summons, the Speaker was directed to proceed, with the mace, to the Court of Queen's Bench and command his attendance. The Chief Justice is said to have replied: "Mr. Speaker, if you do not depart from this Court I will commit you, though you had the whole House of Commons in your stomach." The Queen, it is stated, was compelled to prorogue Parliament in order to put an end to the dispute.

The earliest instance upon record of the punishment of a Member of the House of Commons for the offence of corruption appears to be that of one in 1570, who, for an act of corruption between himself and his constituents, incurred the displeasure of the House. The quaint record of the event—as set forth in Grafton's "Chronicles of England"—is sufficiently interesting to reproduce here. The account reads:

"An undiscrete Burgeoys, of Parliament, and it fortuneth, that in the said Parliament one very undiscrete and unmete man was returned to a Burgeoys for the Borough of Westbery in Wiltshire, who, being instructed by such as delighted to abuse his simplicitie to evil purposes, as he himselfe in the Parliament Hous (beyng sober) openly declared, or else caryed by excese of drink, or both, did spreade abroad lewde and sedicious rumours against the Queene's Majestie's person. And being thereof detected to the Parliament Hous, and the offence by hym confessed, and his defectes and insufficiency well considered, he was from the Hous committed to ward. And for that there was confessed corruption in receiving of money for his election, and also a bande taken of him by certaine of the towne of Westbery, to save them harmless of the said corrupt returne (as hee confessed) the towne was amerced by the Parliament Hous at twentie poun'ls. And it was ordered that he should have his said bande redelyvered. And afterward the said person, for the spreading of his sedicious rumours, was, by order of the Queene's Majestie's most Honourable Council, sett on the pillory in Chepeseyde in London."

For arresting the servant of a Member of the House, the offence seems in the year 1621, to have been considered a breach of privilege. The record reads that the two persons concerned in the offence, having been called to the bar and heard upon their knees in their defence, were sentenced to both ride back to back upon

a bare-backed horse from Westminster to the Exchange, with papers upon their breasts with the inscription, "For arresting a servant to a Member of the Commons House of Parliament."

The journals of the House of Lords, for the year 1667, note the case of William Carr, who, for dispersing scandalous and seditious printed papers against a Peer, was fined the sum of one thousand pounds, and sentenced to stand thrice in the pillory, to be imprisoned in the Fleet, and his papers burned by the common hangman.

Ten years later we have the case of a Member of the House of Commons being expelled for the offence of accepting a bribe from a French merchant "for business done in the House." One other case of expulsion is recorded in that century—not of a Member, however, but of the Speaker himself, who was expelled the House for receiving a grant of one thousand guineas from the City of London after the passing of the Orphans Bill.

Since the close of the seventeenth century the journals of neither House afford any cases of particular interest, coming under the last-named heading, with the exception of one which occurred in the House of Commons as recently as the year 1879, the facts of which may perhaps be of sufficient interest to bear recapitulation. The case referred to is that officially described as the "Grissell" case, the incidents of which are, shortly, as follows:

The Chairman of a Committee of the House of Commons reported that Mr. Grissell had represented to the agents opposing the Bill under consideration, that he could control the decision of the Committee so as to procure the withdrawal or rejection of the Bill for a sum of two thousand pounds. The House, after deliberation, declared that a breach of privilege had been committed, and that a Mr. Ward, the solicitor who introduced Mr. Grissell to the agents, had assisted in the offence. Thereupon both offenders were ordered to attend the House on July the twenty-second. Ward duly appeared, and was ordered into the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms. He was confined in a room in the Clock Tower, and a week afterwards was released on a motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the effect that, Mr. Ward having entirely submitted himself to the House, and expressed his regret for his offence, and having already suffered in health, he, on payment of the

fee—some fourteen pounds—be discharged from the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms.

The other offender, in order to evade the Speaker's order, fled to Boulogne. Knowing that the power of the House to commit or retain an offender in custody determined with the session, he came to London and surrendered himself to the Serjeant-at-Arms two days before Parliament rose. He was committed to Newgate, and released on the prorogation of Parliament, being told, however, of his liability to further imprisonment the following session. On the reassembling of Parliament he was, on the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, arrested and brought to the bar, and, for having previously evaded punishment for his offence, was committed by the Speaker to Newgate. His imprisonment, fortunately for him, terminated a few days later by the dissolution of Parliament.

As a conclusion, the following incident—though not officially recorded as a breach of privilege—which occurred in the year 1875, may be related here on account of its general interest. During a debate in the House of Commons, two strangers entered the House, by the Members' doorway, and took seats close by the chair of the Serjeant-at-Arms, when, having sat for half an hour unobserved, a division was called, by which time the Serjeant's attention had been directed to them, and the first order they received was to take off their hats. The doors of the House being locked, they could not be turned out; they were, therefore, led upstairs into the gallery set apart for distinguished strangers, and, after the division was over, were severely taken to task by that officer. The explanation of the intruders was that they had orders for the "Strangers' Gallery"; they were told by a policeman in the hall to "walk straight on," and they had done so only too literally. They were severely admonished, and acquainted of the breach of privilege they had committed; and there the matter rested, much to the relief, no doubt, of the individuals concerned.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER X.

MRS DUDLEY was having a high time at Oswaldburn. The Vicarage naturally was the house of chief importance in the parish,

after the Chase; now it was the centre of the whole county division. Not only did all her intimate friends flock round her to hear of the Treverton marriage, on which subject she was the supreme authority; not only did the great ladies from other parishes drop in for friendly chats—ladies from whom an annual condescending call was an honour; but three local papers, and one metropolitan society paper, sent interviewers to the Vicarage. The last honour brought less gratification than alarm, for Mrs. Dudley could hardly disassociate in her mind the idea of interviewers from detectives, and began to think that a little reserve would be safer, and yet might imply more.

But it was not till the announcement that the bride and bridegroom had changed their plans, and were coming directly to the Chase, that she became uneasily aware of having been carried away by the interest of her subject to pose no longer as the friend and champion of Lady Treverton. As the whole past rises up in detail before the mind of a drowning man, so did the news raise up uncomfortable echoes of hints given and conjectures encouraged, and even made, that she would have given the world to silence beyond recall. To one or two extra confidential friends she had tattered of the letters addressed to the Monkechester post office, and other small mysteries. Thence had come the rumours of which Messrs. Clay and Hay had written to Sir Everard—rumours that Miss Treverton refused to acknowledge the validity of her father's marriage, that she knew of circumstances which would tell heavily against the soi-disant Lady Treverton, and had refused to live under his roof until the marriage was annulled. The absence of the chief parties in the case allowed unlimited material for conjecture. There were rumours that Lady Treverton had already run off from her husband with an old love; that she had been claimed by a former husband; that there had been a serious quarrel; that objectionable relations had turned up. Then all at once came the news that the bride and bridegroom were coming home; walking straight into this vortex of suspicion, to face a whole hostile county.

Mrs. Dudley instantly veered round to the side of friendship and fairness. She was the first to say that this speedy return proved the falseness of those foolish and wicked reports set afloat by the jealous anger of Helena Treverton. All the neigh-

bourhood followed her lead. The new excitement drove away the old. Every one must at least give Lady Treverton a chance; and, at the same time, give themselves the chance of being invited to the Chase. Conjectures as to her past were laid aside for the more interesting and more easily answered conjectures as to her present and her immediate future. How would she get on with the county? Would she be less exclusive and more hospitable than her step-daughter had been? Would balls and tennis-parties for squires' and rectors' daughters take the place of the stately dinners for lords and ladies? Or would she turn out a beggar on horseback, and out-Herod Herod in her pride and exclusiveness?

And then there were all the "rumours," picked up from servants and workpeople, of the preparation made for their reception. The papering and painting were just completed; but Mr. Elliot, the agent, was in a tremendous flurry seeking servants, and huge trucks of new furniture kept arriving. All these provided subjects of interest for Oswaldburn and Monkechester, leaving no need to seek conversational topics in the unsatisfactory vagueness of Lady Treverton's possible antecedents.

They arrived at night, having travelled all day from London. The darkness of a mid-October evening sorely baffled the curiosity of those ladies who would not for the world have joined the "rabble" who waited on the decorated platform of Monkechester Station, but who dropped by mere accident that afternoon into the drawing-rooms whose windows commanded the road to the Chase. Alas! little could be seen from such dignified positions but the flash of Sir Everard's carriage lamps.

Next day it got about that Lady Treverton had looked very pale and rather melancholy as she crossed the Monkechester platform; and that Sir Everard had returned the salutations of the crowd very coldly, but that next morning he had called on the stationmaster, and thanked him very warmly for the kind welcome he had given his wife and himself. It was through Mr. Elliot that it came out how they had never seen the decorations, owing to the ill-lighted darkness. Doubtless Sir Everard had heard of the "rumours," and had resented the crowd as an evidence of impertinent curiosity.

So Beatrix was at home. So she tried to tell herself, to explain the greetings of tenants and servants who bade her

"welcome home." It was so very difficult to realise that she was the mistress of this stately old house; that it was to be so much more to her than the hotels in which she had lived of late. It was not the stateliness of it that made her unable to realise. It was because her mind was so full of other ideas—there was no room at present for the home idea.

Sir Everard had become so odd, so incomprehensible. On leaving Bigorre they had gone to Florence, though he had himself suggested Venice. It was on the strength of that suggestion that she had laid the scene of her new story in Venice, and she was most anxious that the local colour should be correct. Then, all at once, in the very railway station at Florence, he had changed his mind, and determined on going no further.

It was vain to tell him that she particularly wished to see Venice. The more she urged it, the more he seemed bent on showing her Florence first. She had, of course, yielded with fairly good grace; but yet he was not satisfied. A few days of Florence seemed to weary him indescribably. He was restless, absent-minded; he cared nothing for the picture-galleries; the churches were weariness and vexation of spirit. He was always looking for letters, or writing them. Then all at once he announced his intention of going home immediately.

She gave up Venice with a sigh. She studied Florence, and used the solitary hours devoted by Sir Everard to his everlasting business letters to the development of her story, but she had lost interest in it. Her husband's depression naturally infected her. How could she be happy when a cloud hung for ever on his brow?

It was only when she ventured to ask if his daughter were at home, and if the marriage would have taken place before their return, that she found a reason for his gloom. He answered confusedly, and looked more uneasy. There was evidently some difficulty with Helena. She could now forgive his variable humour, his apparent coldness and preoccupation. It made her very sad to think of Helena being turned out of her home for her sake, though only for a short time. But there was hope in it all, for she was sure that when the girl was married and gone, she would be able to make up for the loss of a daughter who would have been lost, as far as her society went, in any case.

Still, she could not help resenting the hypothesis that Helena's disapproval should weigh enough with Sir Everard to darken the honeymoon. At least, for those few weeks, his bride should have been all in all to him. He was very kind always, very tender often; sometimes he was full of contrition for having disappointed her by want of attention.

"You should not have married an old man, my darling," he would say, in loving self-depreciation. "I think this moving about does not suit me as it used to do. It is hard on you, though. I think I shall be better at home. An elderly man is best by his own fireside."

Now they were at home, and the cloud did not vanish. But there was not much time to dwell upon wonderings and regrets. There were rooms to be arranged, furniture to be arranged, visitors to be received, visits to be returned, all of which were details of the great dominant fact that she was now to take her place in the county.

She knew how critical her position was; that as Sir Everard's wife she must be received, but that as a stranger, unknown in his rank, she would be received with much discrimination and criticism, and for the sake of her great love and reverence for him, her deep gratitude, she would not have it said that his choice had been unworthy of him; much less could it be allowed that the eyes of strangers should detect any sign that she was not the happiest and most blest of women.

It was very difficult to act the part of a happy bride under the circumstances. First, because from the day after their return, for a fortnight, except for the rarest, briefest, most imperfect of interludes, it rained—a close, sopping, hopeless rain, that rotted the leaves off the trees before they had put on their autumnal gold; that forced dreary comparisons with the radiant lands they had left so prematurely. Secondly, Sir Everard still seemed anxious and unhappy, in spite of earnest endeavours to be cheerful and affectionate. Thirdly, the rural society bored Beatrix to death.

If Sir Everard had been bright and merry, and could have criticised and laughed with her, the provincial vanities, and narrow prejudices, and ambitions of an uncultured and ill-natured society would have been most amusing. As it was, they annoyed and chafed her, and filled her with angry contempt. The chains of their small conventionalities made a prison of life, and she longed for the free Bohemian-

ism of the past, sighing for the vanishing possibility of a life spent in roving from lovely land to lovelier land with Sir Everard; who so appreciated beauty of nature and art.

Sir Everard saw now, when people were gone, and effort might be relaxed, that she looked pale and bored. The rainy weather affected his liver, and he became a prey to uneasy suspicions.

"Can she be fretting after that singing fellow?" he thought.

But he was very proud of her. From all the men he knew there came one unanimous verdict of admiration and approbation. She was so graceful, so sweet, so bright; possessed of such innate dignity; so evidently a well-born, well-bred lady. Sir Everard was a lucky man, and they hoped he knew it. The women, of course, were madly jealous, under the pretext of sympathy with Helena. Lady Treverton's gowns alone were enough to make them all wretched. She was so very plain, too.

It came as hard as anything else upon Beatrix that she had nothing to do. She was so well assisted by the housekeeper that even the ruling of her household was a matter so light as to fail in occupying her mind at all. She could not find the slightest point of interest in the county people. The weather was too bad to let her make the acquaintance of the cottagers. It seemed as if all life must be lived from henceforth under grey clouds, in a blurred, colourless world.

The neighbours, too, found matters much less interesting than they had expected. They found Lady Treverton quite flawless as to manner and appearance, looking as if she had been Lady Treverton and had lived at the Chase all her life. They saw her very seldom, for the rain made driving and walking impossible, and it was too early yet to expect a party at the Chase. Absolutely nothing was heard of Helena, who was supposed to be paying visits in the south. So when another stranger suddenly appeared on the scene, he was welcomed as a perfect God-send, though there was nothing in the least remarkable about him, except that he was a stranger; and nothing suspicious, because he was not a woman.

He was a dark, thin young man—"So Italian-looking," said the Monkchester young ladies; "A regular Jew," said their brothers—and he came to stay, just like anybody else, at the Monkchester Hydro-pathic. His name was Edward Watson.

Wonder as to why he should come to Monkchester, apparently with nothing to do, in such abominable weather, was allenced by his frank information that he had got his holiday then, for which he was able to choose neither the time nor the weather. All the scope for selection that lay in his power was between the delights of Hydropathic society, and solitary roamings over Highland scenery in perpetual rain.

He was a good deal disappointed, he said, to find the guests at the Hydro limited to himself and three others—an old lady and gentleman, and an old maid. But the rector, Canon Toppin, having six grown-up daughters at home, was always most hospitable towards the Hydro people, and Mr. Watson found himself immediately an honoured guest at the stately old house, whose lofty garden-wall gave it an air of dignified exclusiveness the ways of its inhabitants certainly did not bear out.

Mrs. Dudley met him at the rectory, and then he was entertained to tea and muffins at Oswaldburn Vicarage. He was quite a charming young man; so intelligent, too; taking such a deep interest in all the Monkchester and Oswaldburn people and their doings; interested, not especially, but respectfully and sympathetically, in the domestic affairs of the Chase.

He was so shocked to hear how Sir Everard had turned his daughter out of doors for the sake of this doubtful young woman. Oh! not doubtful! He begged Mrs. Dudley's pardon. He had only picked up the impression from what he had heard at the Hydro; but of course she could give the true facts of the case. It was true, he supposed, that Lady Treverton was young enough to be Sir Everard's daughter! He was a learned man, he believed, buried in books and art collections, and, consequently, blind to symptoms that would appear suspicious to an unprejudiced observer not much experienced in designing young women.

Oh, but that was not at all Sir Everard's character! He might be fond of reading and painting now he had settled down into middle age, but he had been rather a wild young man—quite a dog in his day, if Lady Treverton but knew. There had been a story that was hushed up—a Monkchester girl, Emily Stort.

Mr. Watson looked interested. Mrs. Dudley, for form's sake—was she not the Vicar's wife, a partner in the firm chartered

to look after the charity of the parish!—said:

"Nobody blamed Sir Everard very much in that affair. He was very young, and only Captain Treverton then. She was a very bad girl, who had turned the heads of half the young men in the neighbourhood, playing them off one against the other. She disappeared, and people said she had gone off with Captain Treverton; but it turned out presently that she had married a man of her own class, with whom she had recently quarrelled, and who was furiously jealous of Captain Treverton, and they sailed together for America. They were both drowned, poor things, on the passage out. The ship was wrecked. Sir Everard was married almost directly after to Lady Augusta Sinclair, so it was all hushed up and forgotten."

"Ah, after!" interjected Mr. Watson, disappointedly.

"Yes, it is a very old story, you see," apologised Mrs. Dudley.

"But Lady Augusta only lived fifteen months after her marriage," put in Miss Mason, a former vicar's daughter, who was very strong on the subject of proprieties, both social and moral, and who naturally loved a scandalous story; "then Sir Everard went abroad for several years. It was half expected that he had gone to find Emily Stort, not believing in her death, and that he would find her a widow, and marry her and bring her home."

"I suppose it is impossible that she can be the present Lady Treverton!" laughed Mr. Watson. "That would be too much romance to get out even of such an interesting story."

Several ladies started, and their faces lighted up; but they were comparatively young ones, new to Monkchester affairs. The old inhabitants shook their heads reluctantly. Emily Stort had been fair and pretty; Lady Treverton was dark and plain.

"But he might have met Emily Stort abroad," persisted Miss Mason. "It was very mysterious that he should go away for so long, as he could not be really broken-hearted at Lady Augusta's death. It was only a marriage of convenience"—which was Miss Mason's way of translating a "mariage de convenance." "She had a great deal of money, and the estate was heavily embarrassed."

It was very pleasant, and naturally not in the least surprising, that such a piquant

story should interest Mr. Watson; very pleasant that Mrs. Dudley should be able to make her party so interesting to one who was evidently, judging from his appearance and hints, one of the golden youth of London. Nevertheless, as he did not seem disposed to fall in love with any of the Miss Toppins, or even with Miss Mason, the interest he aroused in Monkchester threatened to fall a little flat. It could not stand against the influence of the weather. Fortunately a new sensation arose—not in Monkchester itself, but at the county metropolis, Coaliquay; but it was a sensation so brilliant that its rays reached to Monkchester, twenty miles off, and penetrated the gloom of rain and eventlessness.

An Italian Opera Company was coming to play at Coaliquay for a week, and the company professed to contain a real live Princess.

Lest there should be any doubt as to the reality of her title, a biographical notice of Her Highness appeared in the local papers. There they read how she was a French Countess by birth, an Italian Princess by marriage, that having become impoverished through some political or financial catastrophe, she had bravely resolved to turn to profitable account her marvellous gift of singing; that thus she supported her children; and then much of her brilliant successes on the London stage, and on several Continental stages.

Beatrice rarely saw a provincial paper; Sir Everard dutifully took in a Coaliquay daily, and the Monkchester weekly, but never glanced beyond the reports of magisterial sessions. Consequently Beatrice might not have heard of the coming operatic event until some visitor happened to mention it, had she not received, one November morning, a letter addressed in a strange hand, bearing a foreign coronet on the large envelope.

She opened it, expecting a dinner-card from some local magnate, not noticing the Leeds post-mark, and the unusual number of "pearls" on the coronet. It contained a letter, also coroneted, and a large printed sheet of paper.

As she read the letter, with a little pleased exclamation and a bright smile, Sir Everard picked up and opened the printed paper.

It was a play-bill, dated from the Grand Theatre, Coaliquay, announcing that for six nights, beginning on November the fourteenth, the famous soprano, Her High-

ness the Princess di Castelluca, with a distinguished Italian Opera Company, would give a series of operas in that theatre. On Monday night, the fourteenth, would be performed Gounod's "Faust," with the following strong cast:

"Faust—Signor Montefalco."

Sir Everard read no farther. His wife cried:

"Dear, is not this delightful! That nice Princess whom we met at Bigorre is coming to sing at Coalquay. I have a letter from her herself, saying she hopes it is not too far off for us. We must have a box for the week."

"My dear Beatrix, what are you thinking of?" answered Sir Everard, speaking coldly in his desire to speak indifferently. "I cannot possibly allow you to mix yourself up with such people here. It would give rise to all manner of unpleasantness."

She flushed; her eyes filled with tears. She pressed her lips together to check the impatient words that were ready to burst forth. Then she said, quietly:

"I do not think we shall compromise ourselves very deeply by doing as other people will do, by taking a box."

"It is simply impossible to go to Coalquay every evening, or any evening, in this weather," her husband asserted. "I would not go if Patti and Albani were singing, much less a travelling company of fifth-rate actors. It is out of the question."

"You will not go!"

"Of course not. It would be the wildest folly!"

She paused a few moments; then said, timidly:

"At least you will take a box! That would be better than nothing. You—we need not go."

"I will have nothing to do with such rubbish," he returned, impatiently. "I do not care to waste money on supporting wretched travesties of art."

He pretended to become absorbed in his letters and papers, but he did not read a word of them. He knew she was choking down tears, and biting her lips fiercely to steady them. He could hardly keep down utterance of his own angry suspicions. What reason could she have for wanting to drive forty miles a night—or go by train, which was hardly any less tedious—to hear such a company, except the reason of exceptional personal interest in one or other of the performers?

And she! She was vexed, disappointed far beyond words. It was so hard that now, the first time she should have set her heart on anything, it should be refused. Was it possible that he cared no longer to please her—he who had vowed that his whole life should be devoted to serve her, to make her happy?

And the poor Princess—how could she tell her? She could take a box, paying for it out of her pin-money, which was certainly her own, but there would be the unpleasant feeling either of keeping it a secret, or of running counter to her husband for the first time. Besides, she was too much hurt by him to feel pleasure in using money that was his gift for such a purpose. And the Princess had hoped so earnestly, yet so delicately, that Beatrix would remember her promise of friendship and give them a helping hand. The seats were letting badly so far. Coalquay would not listen to opera in Italian. The gloomy prospect might be entirely changed if some great lady would set the seal of her fashion upon them, taking a box, and persuading her friends to do likewise. How could Beatrix persuade people to do what she had not done? And how very small good would be done by taking a box and leaving it empty—so discouraging for the poor singers!

"But it would be better than doing nothing at all," she thought, "if I only had money that was really my own. And I have not a penny."

Then she remembered the neglected novel. If she had only gone on with it, it would have been finished, and perhaps paid for, by now, and she could have taken all the boxes for all the week. Was it possible to finish it in time yet? She could not quite recollect.

She went to find it in her writing-table drawer. There were all the unfinished MSS., but the story was very far from completion. She had almost forgotten the plot, and how much had been done already.

She turned the leaves over, but the story would not come back to her. It seemed unbearably trite and tame—a mere school-girl effort. And who could write in such weather? It was hopeless.

She heard Sir Everard's step, and crammed the papers into the drawer.

"There is no time for anything now, and no liberty. I am a slave," she thought, impatiently.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

HUEL PENRYTH'S CONFESSION.

"I HAVE told you that I am a native of Cornwall. For a century back my people were born, lived, and died there. My earliest recollections are of a sea-coast, wild in its grandeur, and as terrible in storm as it was beautiful in its summer peace and stillness.

"My father was owner of some great slate quarries and mines, and was accounted a person of great importance. I had no brothers or sisters; my childhood was a somewhat lonely one. To this fact I owe, perhaps, a tendency to romance and a passion for solitude. All around me fostered such feelings—the legends of the country, the wildly picturesque surroundings, the never-ending beauty of coombe and cave, and valley, and height, and the storied lore of Tintagel, whither I loved to wander and dream whole days away. My father I seldom saw; my mother had been an invalid from my birth. My education was carried on in a somewhat desultory fashion. I went to a school at Camelford three or four days in the week. In the winter, when the weather was bad, I stayed at home engrossed with my books. I read much, and at random; there was no one to heed or direct me. When I was about fourteen a relation of my father's came to live with us—a strange and eccentric being, old, bent, bowed down with infirmities of age, but with an intellect vigorous and

keen as it was subtle and dangerous. He attracted me strangely, and despite the vast difference in our years he showed a greater preference for my society than for that of any other inmate of our household. To this man I owe an extraordinary amount of knowledge that I could not have acquired at the time from any routine of teaching. He had been a student of Nature, a professor of astrology, knew something on all subjects connected with physical science, and possessed a vast store of occult lore that terrified while it allured me into following its mystical speculations and weird theories. Amidst such surroundings, and under such influence, it is not to be wondered at that I was somewhat different to most youths of sixteen. At this time I had my first grave difference with my father. He was naturally anxious that I should make myself acquainted with the details of his business; but I had an extreme aversion to the dull mechanical routine, the noisy machinery, the splitting, trimming, and polishing of the great blocks yielded by the slate quarry. To me it was all hideous, noisy, repugnant. I had seen the works often from my very earliest childhood—the great rock rent and torn asunder for sake of its unexhausted hoards; the engines and cables, and various machines for carrying the materials to the heights above; the yawning depths of the pit; the immense masses of débris piled together, and left as useless after the labour of years. All these disfigurements by which man wrested the spoils of Nature from her breast, and turned peace and beauty to noise, and turmoil, and hideousness, for sake of his own gain, were familiar enough to me. When my father made the discovery that I was old enough to learn

something of the business to which he and his fathers before him owed their wealth and importance, I gave him to understand that I would as soon pass my days in a torture-chamber. At first he was astonished, then indignant. Finally he gave me to understand that I should have one year more of 'idleness,' as he called it, in which to make up my mind and acquaint myself with the works and their management. If, at the expiration of that period, I still determined to have nothing to do with the business, he should adopt a distant relative, and give him the place intended for me; and I might go out into the world and seek my own fortune, unaided by the wealth and influence I had voluntarily forfeited. It was an arbitrary decision but then the world tells us that the fact of parentage is, to many minds, only a reason for tyranny and moral oppression. As if the fact of begetting the body gave any right to rule or coerce the mind! That, at least, is an independent heritage; none may shape or form it, none may direct its bent or inclination. It is not man's gift, and therefore not under man's control. I tried to make my father understand this, but he simply grew enraged at my audacity, and would not listen to my arguments."

"Our cases are not unlike," I said, as Huel paused in his narrative; "though I must confess that you present the duty of parent and child in a novel light. As you say, the fact of parentage seems to have always been sufficient reason for both mental and physical rule. Body and mind are expected to be in equal subjection, even to the most irrational tyranny."

"But if you reflect on the subject," he said, "you cannot help seeing how young minds diverge from rule or pattern set before them—how a child develops talents, abilities, inclinations, totally at variance with those of its physical procreators. If the mind, temper, and inclination were inherited in the same way as feature, form, and colouring, every family would keep on reproducing itself to monotony. But very little observation points out the wide difference between the mind and body, which are supposed to be the dual gifts of heredity. Indeed, were it not the sole effort of years of discipline and coercion when we are in the malleable state, to make us resemble our parents, we should be even less of 'copies' than we are."

"I think you are right," I said, thought-

fully. "But," I added, laughing in spite of myself, "what a revolution your views would create in all well-governed, orthodox households. Why, there would be no such thing as discipline."

"I come now to this probationary year appointed by my father—a year destined to stand out for ever in my life with its records of joy, woe, shame, and suffering. Love—the love of youth—is a magic wand, striking water from the rocks of the hardest and most prosaic surroundings, turning the darkest and driest soil into a flower-garden of beauty and promise. I—fostered on romance, with little knowledge of the realities of life, with passionate and uncomprehended cravings for the beautiful, the imagined, the unknown—I—I met youth's common fate, and, with youth's common folly, accepted it as a divine gift. I loved. How we met, who she was, whence she came, matters not. She had all her sex's cunning and coquetry. But to me she was Hebe, in her virginal youth; Psyche, in her beauty and grace. She was only a passing visitant, a being—so it seemed to me—from another and more glorious sphere, content to pause in this desolate region and glorify it with such grace and loveliness as I had dimly dreamt of. We met by dawn, by night; in hours of sunrise and moonrise; by wild heights and in fern-haunted lanes dusky with sombre shades of oak and beech, sweet with sounds of ever-murmuring water. Who knows Cornwall at all knows well those silvery tinkling rills whose ceaseless music gladdens the summer's day and the tender, dreamy stillness of the night. I showed her every fairy cave I knew so well, carpeted by white and shell-strewn sands, beautiful with wonders of sea and shore, worthy to be haunted by mermaids of fabled beauty; though, indeed, it seemed to me that never maid of land or sea was worthy to compare with that radiant and gracious presence which made all my life's glory and delight. . . .

"Oh, youth! how we laugh at its follies in the latter-day wisdom that trial, and disillusion, and experience only too surely bring; yet how in our heart of hearts we envy its pure dreams and glorified faiths, which, once lost, can never be regained through all life's span of years! . . . I drank my cup of folly to the dregs; my dream became reality. I loved her, wooed her, won her, rising heavenwards in varying moods of transcendent bliss. I confided my secret to one person only—the

strange, old being who had been so dangerous a teacher. He was not sympathetic; age seldom is. Such age as his could only look upon my raptures of expression as blossoms of an exuberant fancy, destined to fall soon enough from the tree which was so proud of bearing them. In a way, he was our friend; and my father being at this time absent from home, I took advantage of the fact to travel to Launceston, and there was married to Dorothy Tolverne. She was supposed to be there on a visit to some old schoolmate. Indeed, long afterwards, when I was cool enough and rational enough to remember facts and circumstances, I recollected that it was she who made most of the arrangements, and planned with consummate skill, and secrecy, and assurance the whole details of the elopement. The next thing was to break the news to my father, and this my old friend had promised to do.

"A few weeks drifted by; I was too happy to heed the passage of time, or trouble my head about my father's silence. My wife often questioned me as to his wealth, and my position with regard to it. She seemed certain that he would forgive us, and that she would return to Penryth and queen it there as one of the richest and most important members of Cornish society. Her pretty airs and graces amused me. I had no social ambition, and little regard for wealth. The old mansion—grey with age, and with its ivy-crowned tower and porch, its quaint gateway and gardens—was dearer to me from history and association than from any importance it might possess in the eyes of the neighbourhood. But Dorothy held different views.

"At last the long-expected letter from my father arrived. Whatever my fears or anticipations might have been, the reality far exceeded them. A few stern, curt lines conveyed to me the information that he considered my conduct in the light of an unpardonable affront; that, as we were both under age, and had married without parents' consent, and by means of false representation, our union was not legal, and he refused to consider it as such. If I would come to 'my senses'—give up this girl—beneath me as she was in birth and station—accept his offer of a place in the works, and return home in a penitent and proper frame of mind, he would consent to receive me. Failing to do this, we were to be strangers hence-

forth, and under no circumstances would he assist me or acknowledge me. I was aghast when I read this letter; I knew that I was wholly dependent on my father, and I had not expected him to be so severe upon me. Silently I handed the letter to Dorothy. She perused it, her face changing from red to white as she took in its cold, unsparing insults. Then came a scene for which I was totally unprepared; tears, reproaches, accusations, followed sharp and swift; she accused me of purposely deceiving her. She had imagined I was rich, my position secure, and here she learnt that I was absolutely penniless and dependent. She said other things, too, more cruel and painful to bear; but I tried to excuse them in her natural indignation.

"Well, I am not going to dwell upon this time or the events that followed. Sharp and swift as stroke of cleaver my castle of cards fell about my ears. Two months dragged along, embittered by my wife's growing coldness and unmasked dislike. Our small stock of money was exhausted. I tried to get employment, but the remuneration was wretched and the work most unpalatable. Then, at the end of those two months, I learnt that the wife I had so adored was not only indifferent, but false to me. Without hint or warning, she left me one day in the company of an officer who had been staying for a short time at Launceston with his regiment. She wrote a brief note, stating her intentions, and declaring that she had never considered herself legally married to me since she had read my father's letter. The best thing I could do was to set her free, if I had any doubts as to my claim on her, and then return home and make it up with my people. She was madly in love with this officer, and he intended to marry her so soon as I gave her up and freed her by law, which I could easily do. . . .

"That is all my story now, Douglas—the bald, hard facts. The woman I met in your presence to-night is the woman who wrecked my youth and made sport of all its promise and hopes. She is only an adventuress now, and a dangerous one. She says her lover left her two years after her elopement. A few years later she married an old and very wealthy merchant, who died and left her all his money. I told her that the marriage was illegal, and have left her in terror as to whether I am going to proceed against her for bigamy.

It is a poor revenge after all; but when a man's lower passions are aroused, he is but a mean and craven thing: all loftier instincts sink into that abyss of fierce anger, broken pride, outraged honour. I wonder I did not kill her!"

His voice had sunk into muttered and discordant tones. His face looked dark and evil in the white moonlight.

Abruptly he rose, and swept the thick, dark hair from off his brow with an impatient gesture.

"Come," he said, "let us leave this place. I cast her out of my heart long ago. It cannot be more difficult to cast her out of my memory now!"

CHAPTER IX. RECALLED MEMORIES.

THE next day we left Edinburgh, and set out for the Highlands. Huel had, to all appearance, recovered his composure, and was outwardly the same calm, impassive being I had so long known.

He spoke no word of the events of the past night, nor did I allude to them. We had the carriage to ourselves, and smoked all the way, now and then exchanging a remark as to the scenery; but even Killiecrankie's famous pass evoked no enthusiasm in my companion's mind, and the long bleak chain of the Grampians he called "a hideous desolation."

The afternoon was closing in when we reached Inverness, and drove straight to an hotel. Mindful of my father's peculiarities, I deemed it wiser not to seek hospitality for myself and my friend at his hands.

After some refreshment I proposed to Huel that we should walk over and see the old man, and he consented at once.

The evening was chilly and gloomy, with a damp, raw mist stealing up from the river, and the little town did not look its best.

Huel shivered as he crossed the bridge and looked back.

"I am not impressed with your climate, Douglas," he said; "it is depressing in the extreme."

"You are not fortunate in your present experience," I said; "but we certainly do have a great deal of rain and mist up here. It comes of being so near the hills, I suppose."

I felt somewhat melancholy and depressed myself. Every step was fraught with recollections. It seemed to me so long ago since those boyish days when I

had lived here; so long ago since I had walked beside the river with Athole Lindsay; so long since that parting, when the little, proud, hurt face had looked so coldly back to mine, and the forgiveness for which I pleaded had been withheld.

My thoughts would return to her, try as I might to rebel against their thralldom. Was she happy in her new life I wondered? Could she really care for one so cold and staid, and so much older than herself as was the Laird of Corriemoor? In some selfish, unworthy manner I almost hoped she was not happy; I kept telling myself that if she had but waited I should have come back to her repentant, wiser, more worthy of her love than was the hot-headed boy she had known three years ago. My heart felt strangely sore, and troubled as one after another came the familiar landmarks. There dark Tom-nahurich frowned in the dim light, and westward again, Craig-phadric towered in solitary grandeur, and fields, and meadows, and woods, met my eyes once more, unchanged save for the difference of season. The mist lifted alightly as we reached the open country, and faint gleams of starlight showed at intervals between rifts of parted clouds.

"You are very silent," said Huel Penryth. "Where are your thoughts? I need not ask though—I am no stranger to the pain of recalled memories."

"Yes," I said, "I was back in the past. One wonders that Time plays such strange tricks with one. Away from here, those two years seemed a lifetime; now—I could believe it was only yesterday I stood here and watched the sun setting over that hill yonder."

"Do you intend staying long in Scotland?" he asked, presently. "Because if not, you might come with me to my Cornish home; I have not revisited it since I left."

"Was your father reconciled to you?" I asked, with some hesitation.

He shook his head.

"No; and he died very suddenly, before he had time to alter his will, so I inherited everything. I put the whole business into the hands of a manager—a man who understood it, and on whom I knew I could depend. I have never been near the place since. I suppose I am what the world calls 'wealthy'; but I prefer my wandering life to any routine of civilisation."

"Some day," I said, "you will grow tired of it."

He shook his head.

"I think not. There is something Bohemian in my nature. I dislike all conventionality—besides, I could not endure the boredom and narrow-mindedness of English country life, the perpetual gossip and tittle-tattle, the prying into and interference with one's affairs. I never can understand why, in small towns, people take such an overpowering interest in all one does and says—things that don't concern them in the very least."

I laughed somewhat bitterly. The days were not so long past since I had suffered from backbiting tongues and impertinent interference, called but "kindly interest," and as such hiding, or seeming to hide, its barbed insults.

"Oh," I said, "if it were only 'interest,' one might find excuse; but it is the amount of conjecture and falseness that is so trying."

He shrugged his shoulders with the old petulant gesture I knew so well.

"It is a wide field," he said. "First, curiosity and self-importance lead the way, then come suggestion, hints, surmises, tending to conclusions, probable but not actual, and decisions more or less uncharitable. Yet what cobwebs they are in reality!—fragile threads spun from idleness, flippancy, ill-nature, as the case may be; but they carry their sting none the less!"

"It is strange," I said, "how cruelly one human being will stab another to the heart with an idle or unkind word. Yet that same individual would shrink from inflicting bodily pain [even on a dumb animal."

"We are odd compounds of cruelty and kindness," said Huel. "And it is the blundering of fools that too often makes a wise man's suffering. Strange, but true. When you look out on life from a field of experience and sorrow you can afford to smile at the follies; but in their day they have hurt you, and the pain is hard to forget."

Then we relapsed into silence, each busied with his own thoughts and reflections, until we reached my father's house.

Not a ray of light greeted us from the old building of grey stone standing solitary and grim in its neglected garden. I knocked at the front door, which, after some delay, was opened by old Janet. She

held a candle in her hand, which flickered wildly in the draught, and threw strange shadows on her old withered face and frilled cap border and the patched and darned black gown she wore.

"Well, Janet," I said, cheerily; "you see I've come back again. How are you, and how is my father? Is he in?"

She drew back into the gloomy little hall and set down her candle.

"So it's yourself, Mister Douglas," she said. "Are ye no' fair out o' your wits to come here at sic an hour o' night? Your father's in—of course he's in; but he's nae sitting up. He's been in bed this hour and mair."

"Well, I suppose I can see him," I said, "and my friend can step into the parlour."

I walked in, taking up the candle as I did so, and old Janet hobbled after me.

"You won't have a very lofty idea of Scotch hospitality," I said, as we entered the dark and fireless parlour.

How indescribably dismal and desolate it looked! The old, worn horse-hair chairs set in stiff array against the faded paper of the walls; the dingy table-cover on the square table; the book-case in the recess by the fireplace—all were unchanged, save by that two years' passage of time which lay between me and my last look at them.

"Fetch another candle, Janet," I said. And the old woman, muttering and grumbling, hobbled away to obey me.

Huel glanced around; he made no remark, nor did I. Perhaps he was tracing back in his mind the influences and surroundings of my youth, and wondering whether to pity or praise them for the character they had seemed to mould.

As for myself, there was a curious mingling of repulsion and indifference in my mind as I looked at these miserly records of the past! How unhappy I had been once! how passionately I had rebelled, suffered, struggled against the tyranny that bound me so helplessly! Well, it was something to know I had shaken it off at last; that I could face my father in my new-born independence of manhood, and tell him that I had for ever escaped that thralldom of unhappy youth, and desired or asked nothing of any man in future.

At this moment Janet returned with another candle, and the information that my father was awake and would see me if I would step up into his bedroom.

With a hasty apology to Huel, who was

examining the volumes in the book-case, I went upstairs.

The old man was sitting up in bed, his grey hairs covered with an old woollen nightcap, his lean, yellow hands clasping and unclasping themselves nervously as was his wont when agitated. We shook hands in our usual unemotional manner.

"I did not expect you to-night," he said, looking at me keenly from under his bushy grey eyebrows. "You've no' come to stay, I hope! There's nae room ready for ye; and Janet, she's no' fit to set to work at this hour and prepare food."

"Pray don't trouble," I answered; "I'm staying at an hotel in Inverness with a friend. I hadn't the least intention of burdening you with my presence."

He drew a breath of relief.

"Ah, well, you've grown mair considerate than ye used to be. And so you've been nigh shipwrecked, and have met with manifold disasters and troubles, and yet managed to make a fortune, ye told me? Verily the ways of Providence are mysterious."

I laughed somewhat harshly.

"I never knew Providence concern itself about one's money matters," I said; "but it is quite true that I have had a somewhat adventurous life, and have managed to make, if not a fortune, at least sufficient money to render me independent for the rest of my days; not that I should ever care to be idle again."

"That's a good lad, that's a good lad," said the old man, eagerly. "Gold begets gold; use it well; don't be hurrying to spend it on foolishness and extravagance. Money is a good thing, and hard to get. I ne'er thought ye would be a rich man, Douglas; you were aye careless and improvident."

"You wanted an old head on young shoulders, sir," I said. "That's not possible. But let us not talk of myself any longer. How are you, and how are folks here? It seems as if I had been away long enough for many changes."

"I'm no hand at 'havers,'" he said abruptly. "I leave that for old women and young fools, who think the world's only made for them to clatter about it. Janet's well and strong, you see, and as for myself, I'm no' so helpless but that I can walk to the town and back when I'm needing to do it."

"I am glad to hear it," I said, feeling a strange sense of compassion for the infirmity that vaunted its foolish economies,

and the strange clinging to its idol of self even in the face of the approaching shadow which threatens all humanity.

I talked to him for a short time longer; but we had never had much in common, and conversation was somewhat strained and difficult.

At last, on the plea of not liking to leave my friend longer alone, and the long walk back to the town, I bade the old man good night. Just as I reached the door, some lingering memory, some desire, against which I had been battling uselessly all this night, prompted me to turn back and put one last question.

"By the way," I said, "what of the Camerons, and the old lady at Craig Bank? Are they all well? I used to see a good deal of them, you know, when I was last here."

"I believe they're well enough," he said, indifferently. "I'm not one to fash myself about my neighbours. I did hear Janet saying something about the old lady at Craig Bank. She was very ill this last winter. Yet she's no more than my age; but women never wear so well as men-folk. Her grandchild came to nurse her—the little lass that made the match wi' Campbell o' Corriemoor. That was a fine thing for her, and a proud day for the Camerons and Lindsays, I'm thinking. But I think the man must ha' been daft, myself, to take up wi' a bit thing like yon. She'd neither sense, nor looks, nor tocher! Well, well! it's ill trying to teach other folks wisdom."

"But is Mrs. Lindsay better?" I asked, eagerly.

"Better! Well, Janet says that'll never be this side o' the kirkyard. I'm not sure but what the lassie is with her again. She came to the town a week back, I know, for I saw her myself."

I said no more. But my heart seemed to grow lighter of a long-suffered weight. A strange comfort seemed to reach me through those careless words, which for the speaker meant so little, for me so much.

Oh, Athole! Only once again to see you; to touch your hand; to hear your low, sweet voice, and then—

Well, then it seemed to me life might do its worst!

SOME FAMOUS DINNERS IN THE REIGNS OF THE LATER BOURBONS.

M. CAPEFIGUE has sketched the daily habits of the Regent of Orleans, who

governed France during the minority of Louis the Fifteenth, with sharp, incisive touches. His day began, he says, at one o'clock. Unless some very important correspondence had arrived, he was never disturbed until his chocolate was served. His morning passed in an effort to free the brain from the clouds of the revel of the previous night. Ideas, however, cleared themselves slowly, and not until after he had drunk his chocolate was Philippe himself again. His first visit was paid to his Royal ward, Louis the Fifteenth, whom he treated with the most marked respect and submission. The young King had a great liking for his uncle, and their conversation, which lasted nearly an hour, was lively and full of interest to them. Frequently it was followed by a Council of the Regency; after which the Regent hastened in his carriage to call upon his noble and haughty mother, Madame, who resided at Saint Cloud; or he drove to the Luxembourg, and spent some hours with the Duchesse de Berri and his other daughters. At two o'clock, dinner—or what then took its place as the chief meal—*le petit souper*, the notorious orgie which has left an indelible brand on the history of the Regency. The guests were restricted to twenty in number—Broglie, Brancas, Biron, Canillac, poets, philosophers, wits, filles d'opéra, ladies of the Court, the Regent's mistress—Madame de Parabère, and his favourite—and infamous—daughter, the Duchesse de Berri. They began with epigrams of an impious philosophy; they even dared to discuss the Deity and the pretensions of Christianity; they jested at the Church and its ministers; and as imagination kindled amid the flashing waxlights, and the wine-cup passed round with increasing rapidity, the epigrams grew more irreverent, the discussions noisier, sharp words and even blows were exchanged, and the revel ended in uproar.

Sometimes the Regent and his boon companions assumed their masks and went off to the Opera balls, where all sorts and conditions of men and women were represented. The Opera House was set down in the very garden of the Palais Royal, so that the Regent had but to throw open a door, and he entered at once the spacious and superb lobby. Thence he passed into the hall and its scene of meretricious splendour, and was soon laughing and flirting with grisettes, great ladies, and danseuses, whom he carried off to feast

with him and his roués—he himself had branded them with this appalling nickname, because each one had deserved to be roué, or broken on the wheel—in his superb apartments in the Palais Royal. A sight to see must have been that motley company, costumed as Chinese, Turks, bayadères, women of the seraglio, all pell-mell in the Regent's chambers, where the sounds of Bacchic songs and amatory strains, and the presence of tables loaded with bottles of wine, announced the beginning of the orgie.

During the reign of Louis the Fifteenth the principal salons were those of Madame de Lambert, where a kind of philosophical cultus was maintained; Madame de Tencin, where Helvetius and Montesquieu aired their various theories; the Princesse de Robecq, the daughter-in-law of the Duchesse de Luxembourg, of whose coterie not the least prominent figure was the caustic Palissot, author of the comedy of "Les Philosophes," in which he assailed the Encyclopedists with savage ridicule, and represented Rousseau as entering, quadruped fashion, on all-fours, gnawing at a lettuce;* Madame du Deffand, who loved to bring together the most accomplished of the noblesse and the most celebrated of the gens de lettres; Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse, who was the Egeria of the political and religious reforms of the epoch, and the ruling spirit of the Encyclopedists; and Madame Geoffrin, who was nothing if not critical, and whose salon, in the opinion of Sainte-Beuve, was the completest, the best organised, and the most successfully conducted since the foundation of the salons, that is, since the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Madame Geoffrin has a special attraction for us, because she gave dinners—and very good dinners—twice a week: on Monday for artists, of whom she was a generous patron, and on Wednesday for men of letters. It was one of her convictions—she had not too many—that the presence of women spoiled conversation; so that the only woman beside herself at her god-like banquets was Madame de L'Espinasse, who was not inferior in wit to any of the brilliant circle. Horace Walpole, who met her during his visit to Paris in 1766, sketches Madame Geoffrin with his usual incisiveness:

* Some of the sufferers from Palissot's wit invited Rousseau to join them in punishing him. "No," said he, "if my person is fair game for dramatic treatment, I forgive the author for yielding to the temptation; if, on the contrary, the portrait is not like me, no one will recognise it."

"Madame Geoffrin," he writes to Gray, "is an extraordinary woman, with more common sense than I almost ever met with, great quickness in discovering characters, penetrating and going to the bottom of them, and a pencil that never falls in a likeness; seldom a favourable one"—which might surely be said of the writer himself. "She exacts and preserves, spite of her birth, and their nonsensical prejudices about nobility, great court and attention. This she acquires by a thousand little arts and offices of friendship, and by a freedom and severity which seem to be her sole net for drawing a concourse to her. She has little taste, and less knowledge, but protects artists and authors, and courts a few people to have the credit of scoring her dependents. In short, she is an epitome of empire, subsisting by rewards and punishments."

Like most Frenchwomen, she had the gift of making phrases. When Rulhière had read in her salon a work upon Russia, which she feared might involve him in difficulties, she offered him a sum of money to burn it. The author waxed wroth at the insinuation implied, and broke out into an eloquent assertion of his courage and independence. She listened patiently, and then, in a quiet tone of voice, said:

"How much more do you want, M. Rulhière?"

A popular Abbé, who pretended to the repute of a *bel esprit*, she defined as "a fool rubbed over with wit."

The daughter of a valet de chambre of the Duchess of Burgundy, who gave her a handsome dowry, she married, at the age of fourteen, M. Geoffrin, a wealthy glass-manufacturer, and lieutenant-colonel of the National Guard. His métier as husband seems to have been to provide the funds for her social campaigns, and to watch over the details of the ménage. It is related of him that some person gave him a history to read; and when he asked for the successive volumes, regularly palmed off upon him the first, as if it were new. At last he was heard to say that he thought the author "repeated himself a little." A book printed in double columns he read straight across the page, remarking that "it seemed to be very good, but was rather abstract." One day a visitor enquired after the silent, white-haired old gentleman who had been in the habit of sitting at the head of the table.

"Oh, c'était mon mari," replied Madame Geoffrin; "il est mort."

Among Madame Geoffrin's guests were Fontenelle, whose bland epicurean humour appreciated alike her pleasant dinners and her pleasant talk; D'Alembert, who succeeded him as the leading spirit of her salon; the philosophical Helvetius, whom Voltaire hailed as "his friend Atticus"; Marivaux, novelist and dramatist; the witty Abbé Morellet; the brilliant young Marmontel; Grimm; the Abbé Raynal; the Italian Caraccioli; Saint-Lambert, the poet; and the Swedish minister, the Comte de Creux. Hume, Walpole, and Gibbon were passing visitors. She also entertained Stanislas Poniatowski, who, on his elevation to the throne of Poland, insisted that she should visit him at Warsaw. She went, and from Warsaw proceeded to Vienna, where the Empress-Queen, Maria Theresa, received her most cordially. At this time she was nearly seventy.

Besides her dinners, she gave delightful little suppers—"a chicken, some spinach, and an omelette"; and at these were present, the Comtesse d'Egmont, who inherited the refined vivacity of her father, the Duc de Richelieu, and added a grace and sentiment of her own; the beautiful Comtesse de Brionne, who combined the attributes of both Venus and Minerva; and the dignified Marquise de Duras. So celebrated was this circle for gaiety and esprit, that the Empress Catherine the Second received a periodical report of its sayings and doings.

Of no small repute at this period were the weekly dinners of the Baron d'Holbach, who, in the "System of Nature," furiously assailed every religious doctrine and institution that humanity had been accustomed to reverence, and yet was one of the mildest of men, the delight of his home, the joy of his friends, warm-hearted, and liberal-handed. At his table D'Alembert, Diderot, Rousseau, and others of the band of literary revolutionists, who unconsciously prepared for France her terrible baptism of blood and fire, were constant guests. Both at his house in Paris, and his country seat at Grandval, he gave the most recherché entertainments, for whatever else he disbelieved, he believed in *la haute cuisine*. "At Grandval," writes Diderot, "we dine well and sit long. We talk of art, poetry, philosophy, and love; of gods and kings; of space and time; of death and life."

Finally, there were the assemblies of Madame d'Épinay at La Chevrette, and of

the beautiful Princesse de Conti at the Temple. The former were attended by Diderot, Grimm, Rousseau, Saint-Lambert, D'Holbach, the Abbé Galiani, and Madame d'Houdetot; the latter by President Hénault, Marian, and Pont de Veyle, Madame de Luxembourg, Madame de Mirepoix, Madame de Beauvais, the Comtesse de Boufflers, and the Comtesse d'Egmont.

To one of the Princess's dinners the Prince had invited the Abbé de Voisenon; but the Abbé unluckily forgot the date, and his chair was vacant. On the morrow one of his friends met him, and said:

"Monseigneur, yesterday, was in a devil of a rage with you."

Feeling that he was in the wrong, De Voisenon attended the Prince's next reception to make his humble apologies. His Highness, as soon as he perceived his impolite guest, turned his back. Nothing daunted, the Abbé exclaimed:

"Ah, monseigneur, you overwhelm me with gratitude. I had been told you would never more have anything to do with me; but, thank Heaven, I see I have been misinformed."

"How?" said the Prince.

"Your Highness has turned your back upon me, and I know that that is not your custom before your enemies."

I shall avail myself of Mr. Kirwan's assistance to enumerate the good things which the Regency and the reign of Louis the Fifteenth added to the French cuisine. The Regent himself invented the Pain à la d'Orléans; and his clever but dissolute daughter, the Duchesse de Berri, the filets de lapereau à la Berri. Then Madame de Pompadour, who had so large a share in preparing the way for the French Revolution, invented the filets de volaille à la Bellevue for the petits soupers of the King at the château of Bellevue. The poulets à la Villeroy sprang from the gourmandise of the Maréchale de Luxembourg, then Duchesse de Villeroy. The Marquise de Mauconseil, not less renowned for her taste than her gallantries, bequeathed to future generations the Chartreuse à la Mauconseil—a much pleasanter bequest than some more illustrious personages have imposed upon posterity. The fertile brain of the proud Marquis de Neale, who refused a dukedom in order to remain premier Marquis of France, created the vol au vent à la Neale; and the Duc de Montmorancy was responsible for the poularde to which his

name is attached. We are reminded of the first aéronaut and his balloon by the balloon-shaped filets de veau à la Montgolfier. Marie Leczinaki, wife of Louis the Fifteenth, who combined devotion and dining, gave her name to the petites bouchées à la Reine. The entrées known as Bayonnaises were invented by the Maréchal Duc de Richelieu, to whom are also due les boudins à la Richelieu. The M. de Soubise, friend of Louis the Fifteenth, and adroit courtier of Louis the Fifteenth's mistress, Madame du Barry, gave his name to a well-known "plat," the côtelettes Soubise. The perdreaux à la Montglas were fathered by a magistrate of Montpellier, and the caillés à la Mirepoix by the Maréchal of that name, who, as a gourmand, was not inferior to the Maréchal de Luxembourg; and the côtelettes à la Maintenon—but here I am going back in my chronology—were invented by the adroit schemer, the Veuve Scarron, who, as Madame de Maintenon, secured the hand of Louis the Fourteenth, and exercised over his old age so potent an influence.

Under Louis the Sixteenth the dinner descended for awhile from its high place at Court. This Louis was a glutton rather than a gourmand. He could not appreciate the refinements of an artistic cuisine. His voracious appetite demanded large joints—solid, satisfying dishes, with pungent stimulants. But the Royal meal was not neglected by la haute noblesse; and an elegant simplicity prevailed at the tables of the Ducs de la Vallière and Richelieu, Marahal Duras, the Marquis de Brancas, and others. The magnificent hospitality maintained by the great aristocratic families reminds one of the immense establishments of our English Barons, and the days of the late Plantagenets. One hundred and twenty pheasants were cooked every week in the kitchens of the Prince de Condé. The Duc de Penthièvre, when he set out to preside over the Parliament of Burgundy, was preceded by one hundred and fifty-two hommes de bouche. And the Cardinal de Rohan gathered scores of guests at the magnificent Fêtes Champêtres which he was constantly organising at his country seat of Saverne, where he had created, according to Watteau, an enchanted world—"a landing-place for Cythera." After a morning occupied in the chase, the company gathered, about one o'clock, "under a beautiful tent, on the banks of a stream,

or in some delightful sylvan recess," and a sumptuous dinner was set before them. And as everybody on the domain had to be made happy, each peasant received a pound of meat, two pounds of bread, and half a bottle of wine.

It was at one of the celebrated dinners of the Duc de Duras that Descartes, in reply to the Duke's jesting question, "What? do philosophers condescend to these delicacies?" made the apt reply, "Why not, mon Duc! Do you think that Nature produces her good things only for the ignorant!"

Fontenelle, the author of "The Plurality of the Worlds," and "Dialogues of the Dead," whose life covered just a century, was one of the most conspicuous figures in the salons of Paris during the reigns of Louis the Fourteenth and his successor. There were few dinner-tables which the host thought complete if Fontenelle were absent. He was an excellent judge of the finer efforts of the cuisine; and apparently bestowed a much greater share of his sympathies on his *tôtes* and his ragouts than on his fellows. To the easy indifference with which he regarded the serious interests of life—so that Madame de Tencin once said to him, putting her hand on his breast, that it was not heart which he had there, but brains, just as in his head—may be attributed, perhaps, his longevity. Since he ate and drank freely to the last, Nature, if she had not endowed him with a heart, must have given him a capital digestion!

During the stormy years of the French Revolution, "la science de la gueule," as Montaigne calls it, was under an eclipse. Men were too anxious about the safety of their heads to bestow much care upon their stomachs. The head is no doubt the nobler organ, but as the fable of Menenius Agrippa teaches us, the stomach is not less useful. The tyranny of the Republic guillotined or exiled the great nobles and pillaged the wealthy banquiers and merchants; so that the kitchens of the Faubourg de Saint-Germain and La Chaussée d'Antin ceased their activity, and the dinner as an artistic meal, a banquet of taste and *délicatesse*, no longer flourished.

But when the Revolution had sunk into its dregs, when Robespierre had fallen, and law and order were restored under the Directory—1795-1799—the cook's art once more revived. The dinner—thanks to the sumptuous extravagance of Barras, that

aristocratic Tribune of the people, who, both as Director and as a private gentleman at his château of Grosbois, maintained the old traditions of the cuisine—regained its pride of place. It is impossible to over-estimate the beneficial influence of the example set by this benign Republican, who would eat no mushrooms except those which grew in the Department of les Bouches du Rhône, and had those supreme esculents sent to Paris by a relay of couriers.

Among the leading *bon vivants* of the period stands conspicuous the author of that charming volume, "La Physiologie du Goût."

Antholme Brillat-Savarin was born on April the first, 1755, at Belley, among the Alps; was called to the Bar at an early age; practised with some success; was elected by his fellow-citizens to the Constituent Assembly in 1789; was subsequently mayor of Belley; fled from the Reign of Terror into the valleys of Switzerland; crossed the Atlantic, and gained a livelihood as a musician in the New York theatres; returned to France in 1796, and after holding several official appointments, was appointed a judge in the Cour de Cassation; and spent the last twenty-five years of his life in doing his duty, enjoying his friendships, appreciating good dinners — at other persons' tables: his own was always frugally served — and compiling the treatise which has immortalised his name. He died in 1816. His book was not published until 1828.

The aphorisms with which he opens it may be said to lay the foundation of a Philosophy of Dining. I translate them for the reader's edification:

1. Without life the Universe would be naught, and all that lives must be fed.

2. Animals feed; men [or some] eat. Only the man of intellect knows how to eat properly.

3. The fate of nations depends upon the manner in which they are fed.

4. Tell me what you eat, I will tell you what you are.

5. The Creator, in compelling man to eat that he may live, invites him at the same time by the prompting of appetite, and rewards him by the pleasure he experiences.

6. Good living is an act of our judgment which leads us to prefer things that are savoury to those that are not so.

7. The pleasures of the table are for all

ages, conditions, and countries, and are of immense diversity; they are the concomitants of all other pleasures, and when these have departed survive to console us for the loss.

8. The dinner-table is the only place where men are not bored in the very first hour.

9. The discovery of a new dish contributes more to human happiness than the discovery of a new planet.

10. Men who eat rapidly, and get drunk, know not how to eat or to drink.

11. Foods vary from the solidest to the lightest.

12. Beverages vary from the mildest to the strongest and most highly flavoured. [This does not seem a very profound truth!]

13. To say that a man should never change his wine is heresy. Use deadens the palate. After the third glass the finest wine in the world loses its flavour. [And yet our forefathers drank their three bottles!]

14. A dinner without cheese is like a pretty woman with only one eye.

15. Cookery is a science. No man is born a cook.

16. The most indispensable qualification of a cook is punctuality. This is true also of a guest.

17. To wait too long for any guest is a rudeness towards those who have arrived punctually.

18. A man who invites his friends to dinner, and takes no personal interest in it, is unworthy of their friendship.

19. It should always be the care of the lady of the house that the coffee is good; of the master of the house, that the liqueurs are of the finest quality.

20. When you invite a friend to dinner, remember that while he is under your roof you are responsible for his happiness.

And here is one of Brillat-Savarin's anecdotes:

Archbishop Lauzai, of Bordeaux, was much esteemed. He had won from one of his grand vicars a dindon aux truffes, which the loser was in no hurry to pay. At last the Archbishop reminded him of his lost wager.

"Monsieur," said the vicar, "truffles are very bad this year."

"Pooh, pooh!" smiled the prelate, "that's a report set afoot by the turkeys."

Another of the gastronomes and famous diners of this period was Grimod de la

Reynière. In his early youth a severe accident deprived him of his hands; but he contrived, by skilful combinations, to make what remained of them as supple as the hands themselves could have been. Of elegant manners, he was, as a young man, received at Ferney by Voltaire. His health was splendid, his digestion impeccable; and he dined so well and wisely that he lived to be an octogenarian.

In some respects he was an interesting character. His manliness was indisputable; and, never forgetting that he was the grandson of a pork-butcher, he poured—perhaps an unfilial—contempt on his father's efforts to pose as un grand seigneur.

One day, in the absence of his parents, he invited to dinner a numerous company of guests chosen from various trades—tailors, hair-dressers, butchers, and the like. The invitations all conveyed the pleasing notification that oil and pork would be supplied without stint. As a matter of fact, the dinner was composed entirely of various joints of pork, which, he was careful to inform his guests, had been supplied by a relative who was in the trade. The attendants were all Savoyards, whom he had picked up in the streets, and metamorphosed into mediæval heralds. In each corner of the dining-room stood a white-robed chorister, with a censor in his hand, which, at a given signal, he turned towards Grimod, enveloping him in a cloud of incense. "That," said he, "is to prevent you from incensing the master of the house, as is sometimes the misfortune of the guests of Monsieur mon père."

While this farce was being performed, the elder Grimod returned home; and I leave to the imagination of the reader the esclandre which thereupon took place. To rehabilitate his dignity, he obtained a lettre de cachet which exiled his son to Lorraine; but within six months he died—choked by swallowing too greedily a slice of a pâté de foie gras—and compelled, to his great regret, to leave his immense fortune to the young man who showed so culpable an indifference to the honour of his family.

To Grimod de la Reynière the world is indebted for that priceless composition, "L'Almanach des Gourmands, servant de Guide dans les Moyens de faire excellente chère," published in eight yearly volumes, between 1803 and 1810—the palmy years of Napoleon—and supplemented by "Le Nouvel Almanach des Gourmands," in three

yearly volumes, published in 1825-1827. Its popularity was immediate; of the first four volumes twenty-two thousand copies were sold, and new editions have repeatedly been called for in France. In England it is not very widely known, and I believe it has never been translated, though it contains a vast amount of amusing matter, skilfully treated, and flavoured with much originality and research. Each volume contains an almanack for the year, and a descriptive directory of the different *traiteurs*, *rôtisseurs*, *restaurateurs*, porkmen, *poultiers*, butchers, bakers, provision shops, vendors of sauces and spices, milkmen and oilmen, and others engaged in furnishing the supplies needed by the human appetite. There are also lively accounts of the principal *magasins de comestibles*, and sensible, and sometimes humorous, remarks on the philosophy of cooking, and on a variety of subjects more or less closely connected with the author's leading motif. Anecdotes are sprinkled over the whole, like lemon-juice over omelettes. As, for instance:

In Riom, in Auvergne, lived an inn-keeper named Simon, with a special faculty for dressing frogs. What proved the superiority of his method, and the impossibility of imitating it, says Grimod, is the fact that the inventor gained two hundred thousand francs by its practice, though he supplied you with a dish containing three dozen frogs for twenty-four sous.

A gourmand of renown was Doctor Gastaldi, physician to the Duke of Cumberland—"Culloden" Cumberland. On a certain Wednesday he dined with Cardinal Bellay, Archbishop of Paris, whose dinners were always on a scale commensurate with his rank. One of the dishes was a deliciously cooked salmon's belly, which unhappily proved so much to the taste of Gastaldi, that he sent up his plate for it three times, and would actually have essayed a fourth, had not the Archbishop "tenderly reproved him for his imprudence, and ordered the object of his unwise desire to be taken away." Alas, too late! Within a few hours the doctor had gone to that bourne where, we may suppose, there is no salmon's belly to tempt him!

A good story is told of Napoleon—of course, I mean Napoleon le Grand—by the Marquis de Cussy; who was himself a skilled and intelligent gastronome, and the first man who discovered the felicitous

combination of strawberries, cream, and champagne.

One day at breakfast, after devouring with his usual haste a wing of un poulet à la tartare, the Emperor turned to M. de Cussy, who was *Préfet du Palais*, and said:

"Diable! Hitherto I have always found chicken meat tasteless; but this is excellent."

"Sire, if your Majesty will permit, I shall have the honour of putting a fowl before you every day differently dressed."

"What! M. de Cussy! are you acquainted with three hundred and sixty-five different ways of dressing fowls!"

"Yes, sire; and perhaps your Majesty, after a trial with them, would deign to take some interest in la science gastronomique. All great men have encouraged it; and without citing to your Majesty the example of the Great Frederick, who had a special cook for each favourite dish, I might appeal, in support of my assertion, to all the historic names immortalised by glory."

"Eh bien, M. de Cussy," replied the Emperor, "we will put your abilities to the proof."

Napoleon, like most men of action, was no gourmand; but he wished every great functionary of his Court to be one, knowing the successful diplomacy that lies in a good dinner—how it converts foes into friends, and strengthens friends in their loyalty.

"Keep a good table," cried the Emperor; "spend more than your allowances; incur debts, and I will pay them."

Thus urged, his officials did not fail to improve upon the imperial command. The Emperor himself practised a prudent abstemiousness, from the dread that haunted him of growing corpulent at the age of thirty-five or forty.

"You see, Bourrienne, how temperate and thin I am," he would say. "Ah, well, I cannot get rid of the idea that I shall develop into a great eater and grow fat. I foresee that my constitution will change, and yet I take exercise enough. Mais que voulez-vous? It is a presentiment, and will not fail to be fulfilled."

The Emperor drank but little wine, always Bordeaux or Burgundy—he preferred the latter. After dinner he took a cup of coffee. He was irregular in his meals, ate rapidly and badly; but displayed with respect to them that sovereign will which he displayed in everything. The moment he felt hungry his appetite must

be satisfied, and his cuisine was so regulated that always and everywhere poultry, cutlets, and coffee were ready for his use. Bourrienne, his secretary, observes that during his four or five years of service with him, he never saw him touch more than two dishes at any meal.

For the following story I am indebted to Dumas :

One day the Emperor asked why he never saw on his table any crepinettes de cochon—pork fritters. Dunaud, the imperial steward, for a moment was confounded by the sudden interrogation, and then stammered out :

"Sire, that which is indigestible is not gastronomic."

And an officer present added : "Your Majesty could not eat crepinettes and work immediately afterwards."

"Bah, bah ! ce sont des contes ; I would work in spite of them."

"Sire," said Dunaud, "to-morrow your Majesty shall be obeyed."

And next day the premier maître d'hôtel of the Tuileries served the prescribed dish—only the crepinettes were made of the flesh of partridges—which was a difference ! Napoleon ate of them with delight, and bestowed a compliment on the cook.

A month afterwards, just before the war with Prussia, Dunaud put his crepinettes on the next day's menu. There were six dishes on the table : cutlets of veal, fish, poultry, game, vegetables, and boiled eggs. The Emperor swallowed, in a second, some spoonfuls of soup, when he caught sight of his favourite dish. His features worked ; he rose suddenly, pushed back the table, and overset it, with all its contents, on a magnificent Ipahan carpet, and darted from the room, swinging his arms, raising his voice, and slamming the doors behind him.

Dunaud stood thunderstruck, motionless, and all in pieces, like the beautiful porcelain service. What evil wind had swept through the Palace ! The carvers trembled, the footmen fled, and the dazed maître d'hôtel hastened to the grand Marshal of the Palace to solicit his advice and appeal to his goodwill.

Duroc was cold and haughty as usual in appearance ; but at heart he was neither, and he listened sympathetically to the poor steward's story. Then, with a smile, he said :

"You do not know the Emperor. If you will listen to me, you will at once set

the table again in order, and cook another dish of crepinettes. You are not to blame at all ; State affairs have caused the outbreak. When the Emperor has got through them he will want to eat."

A second meal was accordingly made ready. Dunaud carried it as far as the door, and Roustan, the Emperor's Mameluke servant, presented it. Not seeing by his side his faithful steward, Napoleon asked, quickly but kindly, where he was, and why he had not served the dinner. He was called in, and appeared, with his countenance still pale and haggard, bearing in his hands a magnificent roast chicken.

The Emperor smiled upon him graciously, ate a wing of the fowl and a little of the crepinettes, and praised everything. Then, making a sign to Dunaud to approach him, he tapped him on the cheek several times, observing, in a tone of emotion :

"Monsieur Dunaud, you are happier in being my maître d'hôtel than I in being the sovereign of this country."

And he finished the meal in silence, his face showing signs of great agitation.

When Napoleon was campaigning, he frequently mounted his horse early in the morning and remained on horseback all day. His attendants were careful always to put in one of his holsters some bread and wine, and in the other a roast chicken. These supplies he generally shared with any one of his officers who happened to be worse off than himself for provisions.

ALL ROUND SAINT PAUL'S.

"GOOD-BYE till next year, Tom," shouts the omnibus conductor to a friend on the cab-rank, as the last 'bus on its last journey grinds along through the pounded snow and ice.

"'Appy New Year, Bob," is the response wafted from the cabmen's shelter, where a cheerful glow of light gives evidence that the honest jarveys are preparing to let in the New Year with due celebrations. Yet there are not many people about in the streets, for it is bitterly cold ; the shops are shut along the suburban roads ; and only the brilliantly lighted taverns keep up the brightness of the streets.

Merrily ring the bells of Kensington from the tall church tower ; merrily and softly, too, the glad clamour of the leading bells contrasting with the muffled sweetness of the rest. But the dowagers of

Kensington, if they listen at all to the chimes, are listening in their snug drawing-rooms, behind closely drawn curtains. The artists, if not in bed, are probably playing whist at their clubs. Anyhow the High Street is almost deserted, and the corner by the church, with the wintry scene all round, and the silence and stillness, might have gone back to the days of the early Georges, when people waited here for convey across the perilous wilds of Knights-bridge.

In Piccadilly, too, the footwalks are nearly deserted, although all round the lights seem to announce high festival: lights of vehicles flashing to and fro; lights in long lines sweeping across the parks, and glittering in distant constellations of brilliantly lighted streets. And the banks are all lighted up—not much festivity there, but rows of sleepy clerks are casting columns mechanically behind huge ledgers, seeking that perfect balance which is sometimes so hard to obtain. For the Old Year's docket is struck, nothing now goes to his debit or credit, and the printers are even now waiting to rattle off a statement of his affairs.

But if Piccadilly is a trifle dull, the Circus of that ilk is in full roar and spate, piled high with lights of every kind, crammed with vehicles, while lines of carriages range themselves down Regent Street and meander about the Haymarket and await all the world and his wife. Madame enveloped in fleecy wrappers and milord in that great fur coat which he bought in the Nevsky Prospect, are rushing here and there for carriage or hansom, diving beneath horses' heads, and in peril from prancing steeds in all the confusion of Babel. Here rushes Comus, with his midnight crew, intent on boisterous orgies; there rushes materfamilias, play-loving but frugal, with her clutch of pretty daughters, to catch the last 'bus for Clapham.

But this Kermesse is soon passed through, and when once the rush from the theatres is over, the Strand is solemn and gloomy enough. But Saint Clement's is awake; there are lights in the belfry, and soon the midnight chimes will ring out once more as Justice Shallow heard them. There are lights in the church, too, shining through the round-headed windows, and in yonder particular window imagination may suggest the broad, burly shadow of the great lexicographer. There were no watch-night services in his days, perhaps you will say; but he would highly approve of them were

his shade permitted to revisit these glimpses of the moon. "Sir," he might say, "it is a good and happy thing that we should have these opportunities afforded us of reviewing our past, and of forming good resolutions for our future conduct." What good resolutions, too, he would have formed, with what solemn invocations, and how little he would have kept them—like the rest of us!

But Fleet Street, where intermittent lights glimmer from the windows of weary editors, and where subs, reporters, and correspondents flit about unquietly, while all around them sleep—Fleet Street, no doubt, is busy enough with its forecasts of the coming year for the morning papers, and is too much worried and bothered to listen for the midnight chimes. But there is a little trickle of foot passengers about Fetter Lane, where there may be a "fin de siècle" watch-night service, perhaps, with good fires burning, and the buzz of talk around them, and then a stirring address from one who collars the parting year, so to say, and bestows upon it a parting buffet ere it takes its place among the shades.

Down that dark and gloomy passage there is old Saint Bride lighting up her lamp, which is gleaming through quaint, oval windows and rococo doorways of Wren's old church. But who among the dwellers about Saint Bride's churchyard is watching for the coming year? Is it Milton's solemn ghost that moves about among those darker shadows, finding this the only spot among those he haunted in his lifetime, that bears a vestige of its former condition? Or is the Ancient Society of Coggers still in session in some snug tavern over there, and have they voted the deposition of the Current Year, and are they debating at this moment whether it is worth while to appoint his successor?

But here we are by Ludgate, and looking up the Fleet valley, its channels and tide-ways all buoyed out and marked by rows of twinkling lamps, with many wandering lights among them sailing swiftly to and fro. And thundering over the huge railway girders, night trains roll sullenly along.

From the foot of Ludgate Hill there is a distinct movement of pedestrians all tending in the same direction. The City, which on ordinary nights at this time would be found almost entirely silent and deserted, now echoes with a general tramp of footsteps. And as the solemn form of

the great cathedral looms up against the soft, gloomy sky, it is evident that there is a considerable gathering about that mighty dome. A nearer view shows that the flights of steps that lead to the base of the great west front are well packed with people, whose white faces turned upon the gathering crowd below, white faces rising tier upon tier as in an amphitheatre, cast a strange kind of gleam upon the scene. All the great façade, indeed, the whole cathedral, is in darkness except for a lighted window in one of the towers, across the bright field of which are cast the shadows of great bell-ropes twirling up and down, as the ringers, with vigorous arms, send forth a clamorous peal from their belfry tower. It is a peal to wake the dead, and stir the mighty heroes who sleep below in this national Valhalla. And yet a merry, joyous peal, that causes the very stones to throb, and raises a humming vibration among columns, and architraves, and gloomy, arched recesses. All the old passages and streets are alive with the chime—it echoes in Amen Corner and thrills along Paternoster Row, it makes Paul's Chain to ring again, and volleys down old Watling Street and merry Cheapside. And from every side dark figures are hurrying up to join the great rendezvous.

It was a happy notion, whoever originated it, and the custom is not of many years' standing, to meet around Saint Paul's and await the stroke of midnight from its great bell, on New Year's Eve. It is an impressive sight in itself, the gathering of a silent multitude at the porch of the great temple. The cathedral, too, and its surroundings—dim passages, dark and silent dwellings, shops upon shops, warehouses towering high into the air, and yet hardly reaching to the knee of Saint Paul's. And the indefinite mass of people stretching out below, all round the statue of good Queen Anne, standing there white and rigid among the dark, moving masses, while a gleam of light shines upon the golden trident of her guardian triton. On one side the limit of the crowd is marked by the many-coloured lights of passing vehicles, while Ludgate Hill, with buildings half defined in the subdued light, still shows an interrupted line of traffic ascending and descending.

Above rises the great façade, dim and vision-like, its prominences outlined in ghostly fashion by white lines of drifted snow—rises into the clear, yet dusky sky,

where not a star is to be seen. As the hour of midnight approaches, the peal ceases, and after a few sullen strokes the bells are silent. If only the crowd would be silent too, the pause would be a solemn one. But when or where can you find a crowd that is silent! The chaffy humour of a London crowd would assert itself even at the most solemn moment. Yet the general bulk of the people are quietly, yet cheerfully disposed. It is like a family gathering in many respects, so many and pleasant are the greetings. Here are numbers of nice, pleasant-looking girls, fearless and independent, who greet their comrades, male and female, from shop and warehouse, in unembarrassed friendliness; many, no doubt, have the additional tie of common origin. Colonists from old Caledonia muster in force, winsome lassies from Carlisle, stout and sturdy shopmen from the Borders. But the chief source of what disturbance there may be, and it is of the good-humoured, horse-collar order, is, to use an odious but useful word, the masher element in the City, well-dressed youths who make battering-rams of themselves, who clear circles for imaginary fights, who essay wild dances which may represent either the carmagnole or the Highland fling, and who flout and jeer all order and solemnity clean away from Saint Paul's Churchyard.

Yet pleasant, merry greetings go on all the while. Here is one who arrives breathless among a group of friends of both sexes. "Just in time," he cries, "I would not have missed it for something. Such a bad year I have had, and all because I did not let it in at Saint Paul's."

Now, if this midnight vigil is to be taken as indispensable to a successful career in the City, there is no doubt that the function will take firm hold and become of more importance year by year. Anyhow, it should not be overlooked by any one proposing to write a history of the manners and customs of this "fag end of the century."

With the cessation of the merry peal, interest is at once transferred to the southern tower of the fabric, hitherto wrapped in darkness and gloom; but from which there now steals a ray of light, filtered through some obscure loophole. It is too dark to make out the time by the clock, although the dial is visible as a black disk on the dark tower; but the great bell booms out with muffled stroke, and till it

has reached thirteen it is a general impression that midnight has actually arrived. Even then we remember the story of the sentry who was saved from summary execution for sleeping at his post—at Saint James's was it, or at old Whitehall?—by having noted a similar aberration on the part of the great clock. But another stroke dispels the delusion—the bell that tolls only for Royal or high episcopal demise, is now tolling for the death of the old year. So it dies in the gloom of a long frost; dies with all its sins and sorrows, its good and evil fortunes. For now the muffled knell has ceased, and the solemn hour is struck with strident, jarring clamour.

It would be easy to picture some fitting and striking ceremony to mark this watch-night by Saint Paul's. The church in its dark mysterious gloom would suddenly blaze into full light from within; the great doors flung open; the organ filling the vast area with music; while the voices of the choir rise through it all in some joyous hymn or anthem. That would be a letting in of the new year worth going far to see. As it is, we must be content with the flashing of wax vestas and the lighting of innumerable pipes by way of illumination, with hoarse and croaky fragments of "Auld Lang Syne" for a vocal entertainment, and with the harsh cries and jokes of Tom and Jerry revived; for these are the culprits rather than poor 'Arry, who really has a soul to be moved and a decent feeling or two somewhere about him.

When the last stroke of twelve has sounded, there is nothing more to be done, except for a general hand-shaking and happy-new-yearing on the part of the quieter people, and a general hullabaloo among the noisy ones. But it is all horse-play and good-humour, and the crowd melts quietly away, leaving Saint Paul's to toll out the small hours of the night in comparative tranquillity, with Queen Anne on her pedestal, the solitary policeman on his beat, and, perhaps, a cabman rattling past on his narrow perch, as the only listeners.

MOUNTAINEERING IN AFRICA.

It is somewhat unfortunate that every new African traveller either denies the descriptions or disputes the conclusions of his predecessors. There must be, in spite of Mr. Joseph Thomson's lament, a good

deal of romance about African travel still, although it may not be the kind of romance which he said Stanley had destroyed. The real Africa is as difficult for stay-at-homes to realise as the real Redskin; but happily the sum of our knowledge is growing, if the details are still very incomplete. One of the most interesting portions—perhaps, indeed, quite the most interesting—of the Dark Continent, is that in which a mountain-mass of twenty thousand feet rears its snow-clad peaks under the fierce rays of the Equator. Some five years* ago, we followed, in this journal, Mr. H. H. Johnston's ascent and exploration of this monarch of African mountains; but now we learn from Dr. Hans Meyer, who has been "Across East African Glaciers," that Mr. Johnston is more picturesque than accurate, more imaginative than descriptive. Nevertheless, Mr. Johnston's is a most delightful book to read, while Dr. Meyer's is a trifle dull for the general reader, although it narrates some of the most memorable exploits both in African exploration and in mountaineering.

What, then, did Dr. Hans Meyer do? He has done what has been the dream of geographers for half a century—he has ascended to the very summit of Kilimanjaro, and has solved the mystery of the great crater of Kibo. Strange that of all Europeans it should have been a German who first reached the base of this African Olympus; and a German, of all explorers, who first attained its summit.

When the Portuguese first settled at Mombasa—a place which has now become famous in the annals of Anglo-German delimitation, and in the enterprise of the British Imperial East Africa Company—in the early years of the sixteenth century, they heard from the native caravans of a mighty mountain in the interior which was always covered on the top with "white salt." This was at first supposed to be the legendary Mountain of the Moon; which, however, Stanley now professes to have identified with Ruwenzori, a mountain far to the west, but which Dr. Meyer insists should not be looked for anywhere out of Abyssinia. But by whatever name and description it was known to the Portuguese, none of them seemed to have gone to find out the truth about Kilimanjaro. It was not, indeed, so far as is

* See "An African Arcadia," ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. xxxviii., No. 905, April the third, 1886.

known, until the year 1846 that Johann Rebmann, a German missionary, pushing his way inland to found a mission-station, first set eyes on the wonderful mountain whose perpetual snows defy the anger of the equatorial sun. This discovery was almost as memorable as that which we shall presently see made by another German. On the eleventh of May, 1848, Rebmann recorded in his diary: "This morning, at ten o'clock, we obtained a clearer view of the mountains of Jagga; the summit of one of which was covered by what looked like a beautiful white cloud. When I enquired as to the dazzling whiteness, the guide merely called it 'cold,' and at once I knew it could be neither more nor less than snow. Immediately I understood how to interpret the marvellous tales which Dr. Krapf and I had heard at the coast, of a vast mountain of gold and silver in the far interior, the approach to which was guarded by evil spirits."

Jagga, or Ohago, is the name of the inhabited belt of the lower slopes of this mountain.

Twenty-five years later, an English missionary, Charles New, reached Jagga, spent some time in Mandara's little kingdom of Moshi, and ascended the mountain to a height of thirteen thousand feet.

This was the top record, until H. H. Johnston, in 1884, went out in charge of a scientific expedition, and attained, as narrated in this journal, a height which he estimated at sixteen thousand three hundred feet. Dr. Meyer, however, says that Johnston's narrative bears internal evidence that he did not really reach a greater altitude than did New. What he did, at any rate, by his graphic and picturesque narrative, was to cause quite a "boom" in African sport in this region, so that since Johnston's return something like forty English and American sporting expeditions have been made to the base of giant Kibo.

This is the name—meaning the "bright"—given by the Jagga people to the higher of the twin peaks, which is always covered with a snow-cap. The other peak, which is only occasionally snow-clad, they call Mawenzi—the "dark"—not Kimawenzi, as other travellers have given it, the prefix, Ki, being a corruption. The "Wa-Jagga"—inhabitants of Jagga—have no name for the mountain as a whole, but the Swahili call it Kilimanjaro, which, according to Meyer, means the "Mountain

of the Spirit Njaro"—the said Njaro being a sort of African Rübezah.

And while we are correcting previous records, the zones of vegetation should be defined. These are divided by Meyer into six—namely, from three hundred to two thousand nine hundred and fifty feet, tree-steppes; from two thousand nine hundred and fifty to six thousand two hundred feet, bush; from six thousand two hundred to nine thousand eight hundred feet, forest; from nine thousand eight hundred to twelve thousand eight hundred feet, grass-land; from twelve thousand eight hundred to fifteen thousand five hundred feet, flowering plants; from fifteen thousand five hundred to nineteen thousand seven hundred feet, lichens. Thus, on Kilimanjaro every conceivable climate is to be met with. The inhabited zone of Jagga is limited to a belt on the southern slopes, between three thousand six hundred and six thousand two hundred feet above the sea, and having an area of about three hundred square miles. Although small, Jagga is a splendid country, which would be one vast garden but for the endless wars between the numerous petty states into which it is split up.

The great parent mass of Kilimanjaro rises sheer from the plains to a height of fourteen thousand four hundred feet. At that altitude there is a plateau, from which spring the two cones or peaks—Mawenzi, the easternmost, to a height of seventeen thousand five hundred and seventy feet, and Kibo, the westernmost, to a height of nineteen thousand seven hundred and twenty feet. The distance between the bases of the two peaks is five miles, and the base of the mountain from east to west measures about fifty-five miles.

It is separated from the coast by a dreary and thirsty wilderness of about one hundred and eighty miles, in which occurs the bright oasis of Taveita. Both the wilderness and the Arcadia were sufficiently described in our former article, and we need not follow Dr. Meyer through them again. He first crossed the steppes in 1887 with Herr von Eberstein, and succeeded in ascending the mountain to the base of the ice-cap—a height of eighteen thousand feet; but having no Alpine climbing-tackle to traverse the ice, was compelled to give up then the attempt to reach the summit. He set out again in 1888, but did not get far from the coast when he was captured by the Arab chief, Bushiri, who detained him a long time

until a heavy ransom was paid. In 1889 he made a third attempt, and this time was accompanied by Herr Ludwig Purtscheller, a famous Alpine climber, thoroughly experienced in mountaineering. This time he was successful in laying bare the secret of Kilimanjaro, which, as the reader doubtless knows, is now included in the German "sphere of influence" in East Africa.

The steppes were traversed with the usual toils and troubles with porters, etc., and then, one morning, "with the first rays of the sun, a magnificent spectacle burst upon us. All of a sudden the veil of mist was rent apart, and to our admiring gaze was revealed the snowy peak of Kilimanjaro—grand, majestic, more than earthly in the silver light of the morning. . . . A streak of silver in the south showed where Lake Jipé glittered in the sunlight beneath the frowning heights of cloud-capped Ugweno. To the right a belt of trees marked the course of the crystal Lumi and the forest fastness of Taveta. Behind the woods lay a stretch of gently rising plain, and on the further side of it, towering up to a height of nearly twenty thousand feet, the mighty mountain mass of Kilimanjaro. Through the light mists and vapours that clung about its lower slopes, the wooded hills of Jagga showed darkly here and there, and above the clouds, apparently suspended in mid-air, hung the snowy dome of Kibo—the mountain's highest peak. Its sister peak—the Mawenzi—was hidden behind a mass of heavy cumulus cloud, all except the magnificent unbroken sweep of its north-eastern slope. It was a picture full of contrasts—here the swelling heat of the Equator, the naked negro, and the palm-trees of Taveta; yonder, arctic snow and ice, and an atmosphere of god-like repose, where once was the angry turmoil of a fiery volcano."

Towards the end of September, 1889, Mandara's kingdom of Moshi was reached, and shelter was found in the station of the German East Africa Company. Preparations were at once begun for the ascent, which, however, it was decided to make, not from Mandara's, but from the neighbouring "kingdom" of Marangu, more to the east, where the mountain-side is less rugged. Here the chief, Mareale, proved a more trustworthy and dependable ally than the double-faced and covetous Mandara. So much has been said about Jagga and the Wa-Jagga, that it will be of interest here to present their table of exchange.

The cloth referred to is broad, white cotton, made up in pieces of ten arms' length, sufficient for a whole garment to be thrown round the person like a toga. These pieces are called doti. Thus:

1 cow	= 12 doti (each of 10 arms' length).
1 goat	= 8 "
1 sheep	= 4 "
1 fowl	= 2 " = 3 twists of beads of 10 strings each.
20 bananas, unripe	} = 1 arm's length of cloth = 1 twist of beads.
10 " ripe	
2 pints millet	
3 " beans	
4 " maize	} = 1 twist of beads.
10 sweet potatoes	
2 pints of milk	... = 1 "
2 lbs. butter	... = 5 arms' length of cloth.
1 load firewood	... = 1 twist of beads.
1 packet tobacco (6 lbs.)	= 8 arms' length of cloth.
2 pints of honey	... = 1½ doti.

The beads, which are made in Venice, are small blue and red ones, and are put up in bunches of ten twists each, each twist having ten strings of a hundred each. Such are some of the complications of African barter.

A permanent camp was formed at Mareale's, where the stores were deposited, and where the porters were to remain while, with a selected few to carry tents and food, the two Europeans made for the icy regions. Profiting by former experience, Dr. Meyer determined to form a second smaller station on a plateau between the two peaks at an altitude of fourteen thousand four hundred feet; but midway between this and the main camp at Marangu an intermediate station was formed, where the picked body of attendants remained. Only Meyer, Purtscheller, and one servant advanced to the highest camp, and the complete ascent was effected by the two Germans alone.

As the region of snow was approached, a curious "find" was made. While Dr. Meyer was scrambling about in search of botanical specimens, his foot struck something metallic, which turned out to be an old empty provision-tin, bearing the magic inscription, "Irish stew," and beside it lay a tattered sheet of a Salvation Army newspaper. This was a startling discovery to make on the snow-line in Central Africa; but the relics proved to be those of an exploring expedition of an American naturalist the year before.

From the last camp to the cone of Kibo was a distance of a mile and a half, and an ascent of five thousand five hundred and fifty feet, over rents and chaams, and up a solid cap of ice. This meant a long day's work, so the two intrepid travellers left

their tent and sole remaining servant at two o'clock one morning, and with knapsack on back, and ice-axe and lantern in hand, started for the hitherto untrodden summit. For five hours they had to toil across the lava and rocks before they reached the comb of the ridge which they had selected to climb, and an hour later they found themselves on the brink of an awful abyss, dropping to a depth of three thousand feet.

By half-past ten they gained the foot of the solid ice-cap, which sits hard and cold on the head of Kibo, and up this they had to cut their way step by step with their axes. There was not much snow on Kibo at this season; but an ancient compact mantle of solid ice. About two o'clock in the afternoon the top was reached, the secret of Kibo lay unveiled before them — at their feet yawned a gigantic crater with precipitous walls, occupying the entire summit of the mountain. Here it was found that the most lofty elevation was a pinnacle of jagged rock to the left, towering a few hundred feet above the ice-cap; but there was no time to climb it and get back to camp before dark. As it was, it was a dangerous scramble downwards for two tired men; but no mishap occurred, and supper and bed in the tent were gratefully welcomed.

After a few days' rest a second ascent was made, and the former highest point was reached in less time than before. No halt was made, however, and the rocky pinnacle was reached, the aneroid marking an altitude of nineteen thousand seven hundred feet, and comparison showing this pinnacle to be forty or fifty feet higher than any other excrescence on Mount Kibo. This, then, was the actual summit, which was duly christened "Kaiser Wilhelm's Peak," and on which was planted, with three cheers, a small German flag, which was brought up for the purpose. From the apex of this pinnacle was taken the topmost stone, to be presented to the Emperor. That stone now ornaments the Imperial writing-table; but whether the storm-spirits of Kibo have allowed the flag to continue to wave in its place or have long since torn it to tatters, no man knows.

The mountain-camp was now moved to the eastward and pitched at an altitude of over fifteen thousand feet, at which elevation the travellers remained for ten days in order to achieve the conquest of the

twin peak of Mawenzi. This, however, they found a much more difficult job, hard and perilous as Kibo had been to surmount. A toilsome ascent over loose stones was succeeded by the most desperate bit of climbing over crumbling lava rocks. The two were tied together by a rope in traversing ledges, which bore the first of them but gave way under the tread of the second. A dozen times Meyer was left suspended in mid-air clinging to the rope, while the crumbling rock gave way beneath him and went crashing into the depths below. Sometimes they had to crawl on their stomachs along a ledge eighteen inches wide, and at others to wriggle upwards between two faces of rock by squeezing their knees and elbows against the sides. It was frightful work, but there was no time to think of the perils; every nerve and muscle was kept on the strain to reach the line of peaks above.

The peculiarity of Mawenzi is the jaggedness of its summit, the rock being so brittle that it has been cut and carved into points and spikes like the teeth of a saw. Even when there was hardly a breath of wind stirring the travellers heard continually the sound of falling fragments crashing away into some abyss.

Three successive attempts were made to reach the summit of the "titanic rampart of the central crest" of Mawenzi, but each one was foiled, and the Germans had to leave to some one else the glory of snatching the laurel off the head of this unapproachable peak. They did discover, however, what Dr. Meyer is inclined to regard as the original vent of the ancient volcano—an abysmal gulf surrounded by an array of peaks, and spires, and craggy pinnacles of the most strange and weird appearance. On the eastern side the mountain sinks sheer downwards, from an altitude of sixteen thousand eight hundred and thirty feet, into a gigantic cauldron, the sides of which are scarred with innumerable rugged ravines. Next to the Kibo crater this is described as the most wonderful sight in Kilimanjaro.

Foiled on Mawenzi, the travellers turned their attention again to Kibo, resolved upon reaching the summit from a different point, so as to explore its northern aspect. This was even tougher work than the first ascent, and occupied so much time that they had to give up the intention of visiting the cone at the bottom of the crater. But on this occasion a dis-

covery was made as wonderful as any yet recorded. In this region of eternal ice, on the summit of a mountain twenty thousand feet high, was found a dead antelope—one of the same species as feed on the grasslands far below. How and why it had wandered so far can never be known; but clearly the German feet were not the first to tread the summit of Kibo.

Dr. Meyer and his companion did not do all they had hoped to be able to do, but they certainly did what man had never done before. They had solved the mystery of Kibo if they had not mastered the secret of Mawenzi—making four ascents of the former and three of the latter peak. They spent altogether sixteen days at altitudes between fifteen thousand and twenty thousand feet; they discovered a great crater; they discovered the first African glaciers; and they made a thorough exploration of the elevated regions of Kilimanjaro, with an extensive series of photographs, sketches, notes, and specimens.

After resting in Marangu awhile, they started afresh to explore the mountains of Ugweno to the south of Kilimanjaro, and the district of Lake Jipé. Here they found abundance of game, and also many indications of iron ore, with evidences of ancient working. Later, they saw something of the methods of the Ugweno natives in smelting and working iron, although they were not permitted to see the process of forging. The method, of course, is primitive, and the work turned out by the Ugweno people from native iron is not so good as the spears, axes, etc., which the Jagga people make out of European iron-wire.

From Ugweno the party returned to Jagga, and then proceeded to explore the western side of Kilimanjaro. The western side of Kibo was found to be, like the north, covered with sheets of ashes, and overgrown with grass; but with absolutely no forest. The departure from Jagga to the coast was made on the thirtieth of November, 1889, and the dreary journey through the wilderness was completed without mishap. Meyer reached Zanzibar while Stanley was there, and while Emin was lying ill at Bagamoyo. He reached his home in Germany towards the end of January, 1890, having been absent only seven months, on one of the most remarkable expeditions on record.

What, then, are the conclusions of this hard-headed German regarding the land

which his fellow-countrymen are so anxious to possess?

In the first place he condemns unreservedly the wrong which has been committed by the German East African colonising agents in the past. Carried away by their "tendency to idealise," and their purpose of raising funds, they have published the "grossest misrepresentations" of the new colony. Much earnest work and many bitter experiences will be required before men are brought to their senses again, both in East Africa and in Europe. "We have yet to learn," he says, "the golden mean between extreme optimism on the one hand, and extreme pessimism on the other. We must teach ourselves to view our new possessions without the aid of coloured spectacles; to see the country as it really is; to distinguish between what is good and what is bad; and putting the imaginary and the impossible on one side, to set ourselves steadily to utilise and turn to good account what there is of real sterling value."

There does not seem much. Indeed, from a European standpoint, Dr. Meyer declares the commercial value of the products of Kilimanjaro to be so far—nil. In this opinion he is diametrically opposed to Mr. H. H. Johnston, who gave glowing reports of the region. Dr. Meyer says the timber is worthless, the indiarubber is scarce, the orchilla weeds not common, and minerals almost absent. The south side of the mountain, he admits, offers all the essential conditions by which the country can be turned to good account. The soil there is exceedingly fertile, water is abundant, the climate is equable, coffee, tea, cinchona, vanilla, etc., might be grown with advantage, and the people are accustomed to agricultural labour. But then they are always fighting with each other!

Dr. Meyer ridicules the idea of Africa ever becoming a second India, and he condemns the mania of the European Powers for extension inland. All the trade that is worth having is that on the fringe of coast; and as for the German territory, he declares that only one-fifth of it is good land, all the rest is a barren waste, fitted to be nothing else. It is not only sterile but unhealthy, and in East Africa it is impossible for Europeans to live continually for any length of time, as in the northern and southern portions of the continent. Nor can money be made so rapidly as in other tropical regions, where men go for a few years in the fair ex-

pectation of making their "pile" and clearing out.

Dr. Meyer's report must be decidedly depressing for his countrymen, especially as he does not conceal his opinion that in the delimitation of "spheres," Great Britain has got by far the best of the bargain. The best may be bad for all that.

There are, at any rate, worlds still to be conquered in Africa by the geographer, the naturalist, and the general prospector.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER XI.

"MR. WATSON."

Beatrix looked up enquiringly at this very simple announcement, but was neither surprised, puzzled, nor even much interested. All her visitors were strangers to her; this seemed at the first glance to be only one more drop in the stream that had poured upon her since her return.

At the second glance surprise did faintly strike her, for this visitor was not of the same sort as her usual visitors. Many of them had been countrifed, even to rusticity, some of them provincial to unmannerliness; but all of them were more or less entitled to style themselves gentlemen, while this young man was not so entitled. His manners were easy, with the ease of assurance, not of good breeding, or of conscious social equality; his clothes were ill-chosen and ill-out, though not shabby; his appearance was that of a good-looking young Jew. Before they had exchanged a word Beatrix had taken him in turn for a bill-discounter, a touter for some new sort of machinery, and an emissary from the Coaliquay theatre come to sell boxes.

"I must apologise for intruding upon your ladyship," he began, airily. "In fact, I would have written to ask you if you would be so good as to grant me this interview; but I dreaded refusal too much. I was quite sure that if my purpose had been described to you beforehand you would have modestly shrunk from the seeming ordeal, whereas, when you see at once for yourself the simplicity of the case—"

Beatrix took advantage of a momentary pause to put in, speaking very stiffly:

"If you will kindly state your errand I will tell you what I think of it."

"Thank you very much indeed. I may begin by mentioning that I have recently paid a visit to Wellingby——"

"Indeed?"

Her manner changed at once to simple interestedness, which he noted with alight surprise, and which made him pause again. He was not quite at home in his work, and still subject to surprise.

"I need not say how the town that had been the home of your ladyship's girlhood rang with your praises——"

"Indeed!" she interjected again, this time with sarcastic surprise, and a slight raising of her eyebrows; which also he noted, and commented on inwardly: "Not popular at Wellingby, and knew it."

"Fame brings penalties as well as rewards," he said, pleasantly. "The booksellers' windows, the railway stall, were full of your works and photographs."

"Indeed!" again; this time with annoyance. Then she said: "May I ask what reason you have for associating me with the booksellers' windows?"

"Why, where was the difficulty? There were the books in rows. 'Works of Lady Treverton' (Miss Laura Tigar). 'A Last Resource,' by Lady Treverton (Laura Tigar). 'Virginia Vanattart,' by Lady Treverton (Laura Tigar), and so on; and the photographs—capital likenesses they were—'Lady Treverton' written large upon them."

She was evidently extremely vexed, beyond speaking for a few moments. "She has been taken unawares," he told himself, "and there is some reason why publicity and revelation are obnoxious. So far, so good; though I did not think of the divining-rod dipping here."

"I think I may assume that you have guessed my errand, Lady Treverton?" he said, aloud.

"Not the least in the world," she returned, haughtily.

"Perhaps I am the first who has had the good fortune, in short, to interview you?" he blurted out.

"To interview me?"

"For the papers. It is the recognised penalty of fame. I have called on behalf of a London society paper—'The Moth'—'The Wellingby Gazette,' and 'The Coaliquay Express.'"

"Then I must tell you at once that you have made a great mistake in coming—I decline to be interviewed. As I have an engagement, you need not waste any more of your, perhaps, valuable time upon me."

"Oh, I implore your ladyship, do not be so cruel. Every one does it, I assure you; it is only to answer two or three questions—nothing impertinent, nothing trenching upon any secrets."

"Secrets!" she flashed out, angrily.

"Anything private, I should have said. Such trivial questions—and only one or two. Your ladyship has been fortunate, both in literature and in society; surely you will not refuse to put a little bread and butter into the mouth of a less fortunate brother of the pen? You yourself have written society letters."

Beatrice softened at once.

"I do not approve of the practice," she said, "and it is very absurd to make a celebrity of such an obscurity as I was; but if you will kindly promise to keep me out of a Coaliquay or any local paper, I will answer anything you like to ask—in reason."

"I agree to your ladyship's terms, and am very grateful." He pulled out a notebook, and began:

"Your ladyship was born at Wellingby, I believe?"

"Yes; and I am twenty; and my parents are dead; and I had to work for my living; and my first book, 'Virginia Vansittart,' was published three years ago; and I have written for several newspapers; and I was married last August. I think there can be nothing else to find out," contemptuously.

"I am greatly obliged. Married last August to Sir Everard Treverton. May I ask if you were not married before?" he asked, with a sudden, sharp glance.

"Before?" astonished. "Certainly not," emphatically.

"I beg your pardon. It was not impossible."

"I assure you I have not been married before," she repeated, impatiently, irritated by the tone of his last words—a tone which did not actually imply incredulity, but which insinuated needless reticence, and invited further confidence.

"Forgive my stupidity, Lady Treverton," he pleaded, with an assumption of perplexity. "I was told that you took Heather Cottage as Mrs. Lyon."

She turned very red, and said, hastily: "No; Miss Lyon. Perhaps the two names have confused you. I wrote under the name of Laura Tigar—Laura is my second name; Tigar was merely a nom-de-plume, chosen as a sort of parallel name to Lyon. Pray excuse me now; I think I have given you all the information you require."

He would perhaps have begged for a little more still; but at that juncture the door was opened, and Sir Everard walked in.

He looked enquiringly at Mr. Watson, and paused hesitatingly. Instantly a vision flashed across her mind of what his anger would be if he should hear that his wife had given her biography to an interviewer to be published in a newspaper, that everybody might read how Lady Treverton had belonged to that obnoxious class of female novelists. She would have given the world to silence the man there and then; but that would be worse than useless. She must get rid of him at once, and take means as soon as possible to stop him from publishing the interview.

"I am quite ready," she said, hastily, to her husband. "Good day, Mr. —; I think we have quite finished our business."

"Who is that fellow?" Sir Everard asked, angrily, the moment the door had closed upon Mr. Edward Watson.

"A clerk—or something; I did not quite understand him," Beatrice answered, very confusedly. "He came to make some enquiries—I mean, to ask me to help him. It was nothing of importance. Are you going with me to Holme Eek, dear?"

"Enquiries! What sort of enquiries?" Sir Everard asked, with a surprising amount of annoyance—even with something like fear.

"Oh, nothing: just dates and that sort of thing; such as they get up for baronetages and directories."

"Dates!" Sir Everard turned quite pale. "Why in the world do they come bothering you about dates?"

"Perhaps the servants told him you were out. It was all about nothing. Shall you be able to come with me to Holme Eek? The carriage will be round directly."

"No, I cannot go; I have business to attend to," he responded, stiffly. "I will go to-morrow instead."

"I cannot go to-morrow; I must go to Coaliquay."

He looked quite startled. It was the first time she had thought of going to Coaliquay since their marriage.

"Surely Coaliquay will keep," he returned. "What in the world should take you there? You never told me you thought of going. It seems extremely sudden."

"I did not know I had not told you. Such very trivial matters get left out, I suppose. I have business there; I have made some appointments that must be kept. Ah! the carriage; and I am not ready."

"Your business seems to be always of a very mysterious nature," he remarked, impatiently.

"Commonplace to a degree," she retorted. "A cook and a laundress to interview; a dressmaker to fit on a new gown or two; a dentist to stop a tooth; but all people whose time is very precious to them. Come, dear, don't look so cross; I had no idea you would have minded. Do come to Holme Eak with me, and protect me from the terrible old dowager and her vinegary old daughters. I see so little of you now."

"That is not my fault," he said, reproachfully. "I will go with you; my business will keep."

Why should he distrust her at every point? he asked himself, when she had run away to put her bonnet on. She had spoken so naturally and openly; the confusion had quite gone from her manner. What if Helena had never found it necessary to seek servants at Coaliquay? What if it seemed soon to want new gowns, seeing she had bought so many in Paris such a short time ago! What if those small white teeth should seem so strong, so whole, so independent of dentists' handi-craft! Was it not that he was so harassed, so worried at every point, that he felt as if life were a misty labyrinth out of which secrets long hidden popped their heads every minute!

While he waited, he took a letter from his pocket and read it over again; it had been sent on from Monkchester, having arrived there by a second post. He had meant to write a very careful answer; indeed, he had written several, and torn them up, for they had all seemed vague and compromising. The letter was from Mr. Key, informing him that Miss Treverton was making investigations into her father's past life, with a view to invalidating his recent marriage. She had received information—whence, she refused to tell; and meeting the lawyer accidentally, she could not in her triumph hold back the news.

"I have good news," she had told him, riding up to him in the Row that morning before breakfast.

"You are reconciled with your father?" he had asked.

"Certainly not," was her answer, given with an angry frown; "but I have had information; I have not myself been told all the details; but investigations are being made. It is all certain—only a few more dates to have verified."

She had then cantered off with a proud, triumphant smile.

The old lawyer had returned to his office, and spent all the day in looking over Sir Everard's papers, and then searching the recesses of his memory, with the aid of notes and letters. From Helena's manner, he was convinced that it was her father's past, and not her stepmother's, that was being investigated. He had had hints of enquiries going on at Monkchester with regard to the old Emily Stort story. He found a letter from Sir Everard's father, giving him the history of that mad affair. He remembered the young man's wild passion; his disappearance; his subsequent forced marriage with Lady Augusta; the unhappy months that followed; and the widower's quick departure and prolonged absence. It had been hinted then that Emily was not really dead; her half-crazy old father had never believed in her reported death; and people who loved a romance had pretended that Sir Everard had gone to find her the moment he was free.

But even if Miss Treverton had so far thrown from her all filial feeling as to seek out the hidden things of her father's life, it was preposterous to imagine that Emily Stort was still living; Sir Everard was the last man in the world to run the risk of unintentional bigamy, much less to have defrauded any woman with his eyes open. The marriage with Beatrix Lyon was beyond dispute; but he felt bound to end his letter with a hint:

"Some revival of the old Emily Stort story may have reached her. She has put her affairs into the hands of very unscrupulous people, who will certainly do their best to make what money they can out of her. Poor girl! She is hardly accountable for her actions. I never saw any one so changed."

What could Sir Everard say in answer to such a letter? It was enough to drive a man mad. It seemed incredible that any one should go to his daughter with such a story; and here they seemed to be hunting up his wife for dates and reminiscences!

She came into the room, a very stately lady in her velvet and sable tail. What

a good, true face it was! He must be going crazy to doubt her.

They drove to Holme Esk, where old Lady Singleton and her four elderly, unmarried daughters lived. They had been the very last to call upon Lady Treverton, having had personal reasons for resenting her intrusion into the county; especially into Oswaldburn Chase. They were people who had suffered so many disappointments, that Sir Everard's marriage was the last straw, and had broken, if not their backs, at least their manners and the restraints of hospitality which should have bound their tongues in their own house.

"Dear me, Sir Everard," exclaimed Lady Singleton, with the confidential sympathy of his oldest friend, "I should hardly have known you! The girls said how changed you were; but I was hardly prepared for a change like this. I am afraid you have been carrying him off, to too much sight-seeing, Lady Treverton. I am sure neither he nor I are safe away from our own homes now; we are not so young as we have been."

"I am perfectly well, thank you," returned Sir Everard, shortly. "I hope you are as well as I am; I can wish nothing better for you."

Beatrix was so angry at the implied comparison drawn between Lady Singleton's age and her husband's, that she could not help retorting, by saying to the youngest Miss Singleton, who was occasionally addressed as Baby, and who was generally known as Sissy:

"I hope Lady Singleton is not so rigorous about keeping you at home! You will go to the opera!"

"I think not," said Sissy, reddening. "Mamma is not very strong, and cannot risk the long journey at night, and we cannot find a chaperon. Nobody seems to be going—at least, not people one would care to go with. Of course you are going!"

"No, we are not," and Beatrix turned scarlet with annoyance at having stumbled upon the awkward subject in her husband's presence.

The observant Singletons read in her blush that Sissy's avenging shaft had gone home. Sir Everard, who had forgotten all about the opera, and had heard

with surprise her allusion to it, read in the blush a guilty consciousness of longing after forbidden sweets.

"What reminded her of it!" he wondered. Then the dark young man in the drawing-room came back to his memory. "One of the company, of course, still bent on forcing themselves upon her notice! Enquiries, dates? Asking if she would take tickets, dates of the performances! And she tried to put me off with a white lie about baronetages and directories."

"And how is Helena?" asked the eldest Miss Singleton. "We are quite longing to have her back again. We heard the wedding was all off; but of course that is not true; just one of the wicked things people keep saying!"

This enquiry went far beyond its intention of merely embarrassing the Trevertons. Sir Everard turned as pale as he could under his bronzed skin. Was it possible that the wicked things hinted at in Mr. Key's letter were some of what people kept saying? He answered that Helena was visiting friends in town; that her marriage had been put off for a few weeks; finding it an almost insurmountable difficulty to speak naturally. He felt as if he were trying to talk in a nightmare. He was visibly startled when he found Beatrix taking leave of Lady Singleton.

"That man is going out of his mind," said Lady Singleton, in her high voice, when the portière had barely fallen upon her departing guests. "It must be true about the Commissioners of Lunacy coming down to make enquiries."

Sir Everard had been detained just outside the portière to speak a word to a lady coming in, and he heard every syllable, though he did not at the time take in the full meaning. He was thinking about Helena.

"Stop at the post office," he ordered the footman.

When they reached the post office, he got out to send a telegram. It was for Mr. Key, and contained these words: "Do all you can to stop investigations. Tell her it is for her own sake. Hoist with her own petard. Must be stopped at any price."

Then he rode home with his wife in silence.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By RITA.

Author of "Dams Durdan," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I. ATHOLE'S JOURNAL.

"THE greater part of life is made up of failures and mistakes."

I was reading that in a book the other day. The sentence has haunted me ever since. Is it true? If so, how sad it sounds!

I am not of the opinion of the country woman who said a certain aphorism must be true because she had seen it "in print"; but I cannot help fancying that there must be some hidden meaning, some sad or bitter experience of the writer's own life, underlying an expression that haunts one as one lays down the volume that contained it.

And all day, as I have looked across the wide moorland, or watched the sunlight on the glancing waters of the loch, and the clouds that change from grey to purple and gold, those words have been ringing in my ears, and sounding like a knell of doom in my heart.

For fully, and frankly, and without disguise, I confess to myself that their truth has struck home, that my life is one of those made up of failures and mistakes. Or is it not rather one great failure—a record of that irrevocable mistake that again and again women have suffered for—a loveless and unsuitable marriage?

If my unhappiness is of the passive order, yet none the less it is unhappiness.

There is the sense of being in the wrong place; of utter want of sympathy with my surroundings; of absolute incapacity to interest myself in the domestic details that my mother-in-law finds so all-engrossing, or the farm news, and shooting and fishing triumphs of the Laird.

I have been married nearly two years, and I am deadly sick of Corriemoor and its way of life. I know the plan of every day—I might almost say of every hour. The few people who call on us, or with whom we exchange visits, are all, it seems to me, cut out on one pattern of conventionality. The men talk of their tenants or the prospects of the moors, with an occasional dash at politics, or a religious controversy, arising from some disputed text or point of doctrine, and drink copiously of whisky, the very sight and smell of which I loathe. The women discuss their household affairs, their neighbours and their doings, and patiently wait till their lords and masters have finished their libations, and are prepared to escort them to their respective abodes.

There are no young people with whom I can associate, nor does it seem to occur to Mrs. Campbell that I am quite out of my element with these dowagers and matrons. They look upon me as a somewhat flighty and graceless person, and are fond of delivering lectures and counsels, to which I listen with amusement or irritation, according to my mood.

Only once have I been permitted to ask Bella to stay with me, and I think even her irrepressible spirits and bright geniality suffered under the general depression that reigned in the household.

As the months drifted by, and my little dead child was taken from me and laid in the desolate moorland churchyard, I

grew more and more restless and unhappy. In vain I tried to assure myself that things would improve, or that I should settle down into "my groove." They grew steadily worse.

My husband was kind; but he was not companionable, and certainly not observant. It never seemed to occur to him that I could possibly be dissatisfied with my life at Corriemoor, or find it anything but delightful. His mother had lived there ever since her married life began, and his grandfather's wife before her, and another generation or two, no doubt, antedated their advent. The young generation were expected to follow in the footsteps of those older and wiser members of the family. I dared not say that the sameness, the deadly dullness of the routine were oppressing me to such a degree that at times I was almost urged to outspoken rebellion.

The weather, too, was particularly dreary. It rained incessantly throughout the summer, and the disconsolate grey landscape, the dripping trees, and the lowering sky did not form an inspiring prospect—much as I had heard about the never-failing beauty of Corriemoor.

Perhaps the leaven of my own discontent had entered into everything; but try as I might, I could not make mind, feeling, taste, and inclinations fit into the groove laid down for them.

It needs the harsher discipline of life to teach one patience and forbearance; but I was young, passionate, enthusiastic, and therefore fitted my surroundings about as well as the proverbial "peg" in its square hole.

I knew that there were people who would have been perfectly happy in my position; but I chafed like a restive steed under the perpetual restraint imposed on mind, word, and feeling. I could not interest myself in my neighbours' concerns, though they were good enough to take an extraordinary interest in mine.

If one has any sense of the picturesque, the romantic, the dramatic, one cannot help trying to fit surroundings and associations accordingly; but my efforts were vain, and my figures nothing but "lay-figures" of the very heaviest and protest type.

So in gloom, and heaviness, and depression, the months dropped one by one into the lap of the past, and I was only aroused out of my long apathy by a sudden and terrifying summons from Grannie.

She was dangerously ill—dying they said—and her one cry was for me.

The Laird took me to Iverness straightway, and left me in the little hushed house that seemed so homelike and so dear.

Grannie was very ill—the doctor almost despaired of her—but she took "a turn," as they said, very soon after my arrival, and in three weeks' time was convalescent. I stayed on; I was in no hurry to return to Corriemoor, and its gloom and loneliness.

At Craig Bank I felt at home. Some one or other of the Camerons was perpetually dropping in. Bella and I shared the duties of nursing between us. There was sunshine, and air, and exercise, and pleasant companionship for me, and as a flower expands and rejoices in a congenial atmosphere, so I grew brighter, happier, more content, and the change soon made itself apparent in my looks, and manners, and habits, as Bella speedily remarked.

"Such a queer bit creature," she said, in her merry teasing way; "lifting its head like a flower after rain, because it's petted, and spoiled, and fussed over! But what had they done to you, Athole?" she added, more gravely. "You looked just broken down when you came here. Aren't you happy, dearie?"

The old fond word, the old fond tones—they almost broke me down.

I shook my head.

"I'm as happy as I can expect to be," I said, "if there is any meaning in the word—which I sometimes doubt. But my life is very dull and depressing, Bella. That is the honest truth."

"Well, they are rather old fogies for you, my pet. I wish I were a bit nearer and could run over and have a chat with you every day."

"So do I," I echoed, heartily. "My mother-in-law and the Laird are not the liveliest company in the world."

"But you have your books, your music!" she said.

"They hate to see me reading, and they only like me to play Scotch music," I answered, gloomily. "Mrs. Campbell thinks I ought to be always at needlework, and you know I detest it!"

"Yes, I know," she said, with a humorous twinkle in her bright eyes. "I mind well the lazy wee lassie who would not put stitch or seam to gown for any coaxing. But, as you're a rich, fine lady

now, surely you have a maid to do your sewing!"

"Oh, yes; but still, Mrs. Campbell thinks I ought to do a good deal myself."

"But surely you're mistress, Athole, and can do what you like? You musn't let the old lady rule you in everything."

"I'm afraid she's rather what you would call a 'managing' person, Bella," I said, ruefully. "I began by giving in to her, and begging her to keep the position of mistress, and she means to do so, I can see."

Bella shook her head deprecatingly.

"I told you that was a bad plan."

"But what could I do?" I urged. "I was too young and too ignorant to take my place as the head of the household. Besides, it would have been worse to have had her watching and criticising all my blunders. As it is, at least, she has occupation, and I am saved the scoldings that I hear lavished on Jean, and Mag, and Janet perpetually."

"I'm afraid you're not quite happy, Athole?" she said, gently.

I felt the tears rise to my eyes.

"Oh, my dear," I said, "who in this world can expect to be that? There must always be shadow to sunlight; a cross, a drawback, a want un supplied. I am as well off as most people—better, perhaps, than many; I ought not to be discontented. The pebble in my shoe is a very small one."

"But there should be no pebble at all," she said. "Even a small one makes the foot sore when the journey is long."

"Perhaps," I said, drearily, "my journey may not be very long. Sometimes I pray so."

She turned away somewhat abruptly. For that night we talked no more of Corriemoor, or my life there.

Grannie's health steadily improved, and the Laird's letters began to suggest my return. I was in no hurry to notice his hints; I felt a growing disinclination to go back to the prison-house I loathed after this unexpected spell of liberty. Bella, I fear, somewhat encouraged my insubordination; we were so happy together; we had such innocent jests and jokes, such long, delicious walks, such tender, half-spoken confidences.

Kenneth came up from Edinburgh for a week; I had not seen him since I married; he was very much altered—grave, reticent,

self-important. He had given himself up heart and soul to his studies and profession, and was everywhere spoken of with the Scotch measure of cautious praise, as "likely to do well."

We did not get on at all, he and I; I disliked the masterful importance of his newly-acquired manner; and he, to all intents and purposes, had not approved of my marriage, and was fond of making disparaging remarks concerning the Laird and affairs at Corriemoor generally. I was not sorry when he left. I had but four days more of liberty, and then I must leave Craig Bank; an imperative summons had reached me, and I knew that excuses could no longer avail.

One afternoon I had left Grannie asleep, and was hurrying along the High Street on my way to the Camerons. It was a dull, misty day, with lowering sky that threatened rain, and a piercing easterly wind that made me draw my warm cloak closely round me as I walked along.

The street was almost deserted. I saw but two figures in the whole length of the thoroughfare. They were approaching me from the opposite direction. Suddenly, something in the walk, height, bearing of one of them struck me as familiar. My heart gave one quick leap; the blood seemed to rush in a burning torrent to my face; my feet refused to stir.

Were not the seas between us? Had we not said good-bye for ever? Yet, surely, fancy was playing me no trick now.

Dizzily, stupidly, I tried to collect my wits, to pass on quietly and unconcernedly with but one glance, that seemed rather to defy than to court recognition. In vain. A start, a husky cry—the cry of an emotion, strong and swift as pain, and sorrow, and memory could make it, and then my hand was clasped in the warm strong clasp of old, and once more I stood, pale and trembling, in the presence of Douglas Hay!

CHAPTER II.

TWO YEARS—AND AFTERWARDS.

TWO years—two years of trial, suffering, weariness, rolled back as a scroll before flame. My heart, which had so long forgotten to feel glad, fluttered like a bird at sound of that voice speaking my name. The blood that had known no change in its even flow coursed madly and wildly

through my veins, as once again I met those eyes that had been the only lover's eyes to me.

What mattered that we had parted in anger? What mattered bitterness, pride, distrust, coldness? One unguarded moment had bereft me of all composure, and I stood face to face with just the one being in the world who had power to so move and discompose me; truth speaking out in face, and eyes, and trembling voice—truth that defied all effort at coldness.

He was equally agitated. The colour faded from his face; his eyes spoke of pain and gladness both; the hand that clasped mine trembled like a weak girl's; the very accents of his voice were unsteady.

With a strong effort I gained my self-control. I saw the keen eyes of the stranger, who was with Douglas, watching us both intently.

I expressed surprise at seeing him back in Scotland. For two years no word of him had reached me. I imagined he was still in Canada.

"But I have never been to Canada at all," he said. "Is it possible you did not hear that I was shipwrecked?"

"I have heard nothing," I answered, simply. "I live so far away, and news travels slowly."

"True—I—I forgot," he said, huskily. "Your home is at Corriemoor. Are you staying long in Inverness?"

"Three days more," I said, quietly. "Grannie has been very ill, and she sent for me to nurse her. I have been at Craig Bank for the last six weeks. When did you arrive?"

"Only yesterday," he said; and then, apparently remembering his companion, he introduced him to me by the name of "Mr. Huel Penryth."

A strange name, I thought, and a strange man, too. My first impression of him was not favourable; the face was a powerful one, but stern and cold, with dark, inscrutable eyes, that read more than they revealed. The wild, thick hair, streaked with grey, fell back from a broad and heavily-lined brow. Care, and suffering, and endurance had left their mark upon this man; so much even my inexperienced eyes could tell.

He raised his hat with grave politeness as I bowed in answer to Douglas's hurried murmur, and as I met his glance it seemed to me that he had read my secret, and was speculating as to its future bearing on my life. I could not have explained why I

felt this, but the consciousness was so acute that I could almost have fancied it had flashed from brain to brain as the electric current flies from one centre of active force to another.

He spoke, and his voice held a charm that could not be gainsaid—full, rich, and with a melancholy sweetness of intonation. I found myself listening to the sound even more than to the words, and they were not mere conventional words either. He briefly conveyed the history of that shipwreck, and the friendship that had been born of mutual hardship, endurance, and companionship.

It was the history of those two blank years, summed up and presented to me with an elaborate simplicity that yet seemed to lack no detail.

Douglas showed signs of impatience.

"Where are you bound for?" he asked, at last. "We are keeping you standing in the cold all this time."

I mentioned my destination, and they both turned and walked with me.

How strange it seemed—how strange I felt! I was as one in dreamland—haunted by past visions that were floating and centring themselves in the present. A word, a glance, a smile, and how much was said and recalled!

Timidly I glanced at Douglas's face from time to time. How altered it was! All the boyishness and youth had fled—it was stern and grave, and had lost much of the bright colouring and animation which had lent it so great a charm. But instinctively I felt that it had gained in expression and character far more than it had lost in youth and gaiety.

We met on very different ground to that on which we had parted; yet I think that the memory of that parting was keenly with us both—I had been so hard and unforgiving; he so sad and so remorseful. But all was altered now—we were boy and girl no longer. Life had grown of interest and importance to him, and had surrounded me with duties and responsibilities; yet it was hard to put the new personality in place of the old—to see only Mrs. Campbell of Corriemoor in the Athole Lindsay of both our memories. I noticed he never addressed me by my married name. I felt inclined to ask him when and how he had heard of that event; but somehow I could not frame the words, and I therefore talked, or tried to talk, of mere conventional matters connected with mutual friends and mutual memories.

We reached the Camerons' house, and I paused at the gate.

"I shall call on them in the course of a day or two," said Douglas; "not this morning. Do you think," he added, hesitatingly, "that Mrs. Lindsay would be well enough to see me if I paid her a visit?"

"She would be very pleased, I am sure," I answered; "she comes downstairs now every afternoon."

Then we shook hands once more, and they turned down the street while I went into Aunt Cameron's domicile. The girls were round me in a moment, full of eager curiosity. They had seen me and my two companions from the window.

Was that really—surely it could not be Douglas Hay? How old and altered he was! how tall he looked! and who was his friend? and so on, and so on. Their merry chatter, their incessant questioning, jarred on me at times; but I did my best to satisfy their curiosity, adding that Douglas Hay himself would be round to see them in a day or two.

After a while the younger girls drifted away to their usual duties or occupations; Bella and I were alone.

There was a space of silence—then her bright, dark eyes met mine with grave scrutiny.

"How did you feel?" she asked, abruptly. "It was rather—unexpected."

"That," I said, with a faint laugh, "was just what I felt. You could not have expressed it better."

"And you don't mind—you can be friends?" she persisted. "I am rather sorry he came here. What brought him?"

"Paternal affection, no doubt," I said. "He came to see his father."

"Of course he had heard of your marriage? Who told him?"

"He mentioned Corriemoor as my place of abode," I said; "but I did not ask who was his informant."

She was silent for a moment. Then she came to me, quite suddenly, and folded her arms about me, and drew me to her dear, true heart.

"Oh, my dearie," she said; "don't speak in that hard, cold way to me. Have I not known it all—have I not seen you fighting your battle, month by month, year by year? And hasn't it wrung my heart again and again to watch the change in your wee face—that has grown so sad and weariful of late? But I'd be no true friend to you, Athole, if I did not speak

the plain truth now. There is far more danger in your meeting with Douglas Hay than ever there was before. It is wiser to recognise a temptation than to believe in one's power of resistance when the danger comes. You will promise me not to see him or meet him, won't you, dear? You'll only be laying up fresh unhappiness for yourself if you do. Mind—I speak plainly—it is not as if your marriage had contented you; and he will watch that very keenly, and, if he still cares——"

"Oh, Bella! But that is all over long, long ago," I interrupted.

"Love is a hard thing to kill," she said. "There is just one final ending to it; but neither you nor he touched that."

"I think," I said, coldly, "there is nothing to fear now, Bella, not on either side. Even if there were—— Well, I am here but three days more. After that, I shall probably never see him again."

"I hope so," she said, earnestly. "I hope it all the more because I know how useless are warnings, counsels, efforts, in a case like this. I never had a high opinion of Douglas Hay's character, as you know; but that does not prevent my seeing that he is very attractive and very fascinating."

"That," I said, "could never tempt me again—nothing in that way; I want something deep, real, strong—something to lean on and depend on. I suppose," I added, with a little bitterness, "it sounds very shocking to say such a thing, but I should like to have liberty to experiment on different people, and see how they affect me, or I them. It seems as if life hampered us so dreadfully; we can't really know each other; we can't say what our real feelings or natures are unless they are tested. I seem to know people so little, and yet I always want to get below the surface, to reach something that will respond and answer to my own appeal, my own need. But I never can—I never can."

She was silent. Presently she said:

"That is an odd fancy on your part, Athole. I don't wonder you are unhappy; you ask too much of life, and feel too deeply."

"Perhaps that is so," I answered. "I am not happy, I am not contented, and I am not good. Yet I might be all; and I long to be, very often. I wonder where the secret of my failure lies? In myself, of course. But how can I comprehend or reach it? One's inner nature is always

more or less of a mystery. When I think of what I am, and what I want, of the intense longings for a fuller and deeper life, the perpetual rebellion against my groove, I feel tempted to do something desperate. I only act and react upon myself. No wonder I feel storm-beaten."

"It seems strange to look at you, and then hear you talk like this," said Bella, thoughtfully. "If your life was more active you would be less morbid."

"My life is destined to be always as it is now, I fear," I answered, drawing away from her arms at last. "It is my only comfort to have you to talk to, Bella. I think no one else understands me, or—cares very much."

"Your husband cares for you, dearie. He is grave and serious, and perhaps he seems cold; but he is so good."

"Oh, I know that," I answered. "It is my own ceaseless reproach. Sometimes I think that I must be very ungrateful, very wicked; but I can't help it; I can't alter myself, as I said before. If I could——"

"Well!" she said, looking at me gravely, and with a little troubled pucker of her white, smooth brow.

"Oh," I said, laughing, "I would turn myself into Meg, or Jean, of course, with no thought beyond the 'kye at the byrne,' and the stocking-knitting for the household. How I envy the dull, commonplace content of such lives!"

"I'm sure you don't—not really," said Bella, with energy. "But my opinion is you want rousing—a change. Why can't you get the Laird to take you away? He went abroad once, and he told me he enjoyed it very much. Why shouldn't he go again?"

I laughed as I remembered some passages of that foreign tour, and the passive composure and grim endurance which Donald had displayed.

"If he told you so," I answered, "be very sure he did not mean it. He hates foreign travel and foreign ways; even foreign scenery could only wring a reluctant admission from his lips that it was 'no' that bad.' I believe he thinks Nature quite incapable of favouring any land but Scotland. Oh, dear," I added with a weary sigh, "how hard it is to be fettered and hampered like this, to be a prisoner with one's chains always weighing one down! Now, if only you and I could go off together, Bella, that would be some fun, wouldn't it? And though there's no reason why we shouldn't, yet just picture

to yourself the outcry that would arise at the bare suggestion. How all our Scotch Mrs. Grundys would hold up their hands in righteous horror at the 'impropriety'! Oh! how I envy American girls; they do get some enjoyment out of life and youth; and I'm sure they're not a bit the worse for it."

"I never met one," said Bella, with a gravity that set me off laughing. "But they're rather bold and forward, are they not?"

"I never found them so, and I've come across plenty in my travels," I said. "Very free and independent, if you like, and as a rule far better educated than English girls. At least they talk better, and seem to be at home on most subjects. They are far more brilliant and amusing than girls of any other nation."

"But not nearly so refined or well-bred," persisted Bella.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"That means not so dull, or repressed, or conventional. Of course their manners and habits are very different to ours; but I always found them interesting."

"Well," said Bella, laughing, "I almost wish we could turn ourselves into American girls for the time being, and go off on a 'foreign tour' as you suggest. I've always been crazy to go abroad; but I might as well ask for the moon as for permission to do it, or opportunity even if I had the permission."

"Well, I must go back now," I said, with a sigh. "Come round this evening, Bella, if you've nothing to do. It's so dull when Grannie goes to bed."

"Certainly, I'll come," she said, briskly. "Must you really go back to Corriemoor on Saturday?"

"No help for it," I answered. "But I really don't see why I shouldn't take you back with me, dear."

"Mrs. Campbell doesn't like me," she said, laughing. "I'm not staid enough, or grave enough, I fancy."

"Never mind Mrs. Campbell," I said. "Surely I may be permitted a little independence. The Laird is coming here for me. I'll tell him you will return and stay a few weeks with us. May I?"

"Now, Athole, you know well that I'm always happy to be with you; but——"

"No buts, no buts!" I cried, putting my hands to my ears. "I'll settle all the 'pros and cons,' and you pack your box. You needn't be particular; anything does for Corriemoor."

THE GUELPHS.

WE are not to speak or write of the House of Hanover any more, it seems, still less of Brunswick, when alluding to our ruling dynasty—henceforth they are to be known as the Guelphs. And this is not such a pretty name as Stuart or Tudor, at least, in its present form. But it would look and sound much better if we reverted to the original Teutonic spelling, and made it Welf, or even Wolf. The "House of the Wolf" has a fine, romantic sound about it, and we may guess that in the distant ages to which the pedigree of our Royal line conducts us, the wolf was the "totem" of the chieftains of some warlike tribe, who, after long and painful wanderings, descended at last—the date necessarily uncertain—into the fertile Suabian land. They may have fought at Troy, they may have warred with Medes and Persians against Babylon and Nineveh. Pretty certainly they had something to say about the fall of Rome, and were quite an established family, with a position of their own, when Charlemagne ruled the Western World. Indeed, there is no Royal or princely house anywhere that can show such an authentic history and genealogy, stretching backwards to times so remote. The House of Capet is but a mushroom compared with the Guelphs, the Hapsburgs mere roturiers, the Hohenzollerns people of yesterday.

With the Guelphs, family tradition ends in folk-lore, for distinctly of that order is the story of the origin of the family name as given in the catalogue of the newly opened Guelph Exhibition, at the New Gallery in Regent Street. The heroine of the tale is Hildegarde, the wife of Sir Isenbart, son of a worthy Count at the Court of Carloman—a wife who was herself a sister of Hildegarde, the consort of the great Emperor. To punish her for a certain freedom of opinion aent physiological speculations, she was doomed to be the mother of twelve, not consecutively and in due order, which might have been endured, but all at a birth—a whole litter of children, in fact. As if they had really been pups, Hildegarde picked out one, and ordered the rest into a basket, and so to the river. But the father met the good nurse, and asked her what she was carrying, when she replied, "Whelps for drowning." But the cries of the babes reached the father's ears; he rescued the

brood, and in memory of the event he named the eldest of them—was he in the basket, and how was his precedence ascertained among so many! These points are left doubtful. But anyhow, from this time, A.D. 820, the family has flourished under its present title, allowing for the ignorance of the Italians of the virtues of a W, and the consequent transformation of the name into Guelph.

After this it is disappointing to find that the line of Guelph ended in a female somewhere about the time of Edward the Confessor, and were merged in the powerful family, d'Este, which, after all, if genealogists are to be believed, is the veritable patronymic of our Queen. And the d'Estes have a pedigree which vies with that of the Guelphs, although it only goes back to the somewhat mythical times of the early Roman Kings. But when the family come into our horizon it is not their early history that interests us, so much as their connection with the line of Stuart. To them, as to the Stuarts, the crown "came with a lass," a very vigorous and virile lass, the daughter of Elizabeth, that Queen of Bohemia who, after the restoration of her nephew, Charles the Second, lived for a time near the bottom of Drury Lane, in the Strand, and subsequently in Leicester Square. And as Sophia, Electress of Hanover, the lass takes her proper place as number one in the catalogue, in a not very convincing portrait, with something of a Wardour Street air about it. More interesting and characteristic is a good portrait of the unhappy Sophia Dorothea of Zell, the wife of our George the First, and the ancestress of the Royal line, the story of whose intrigue with the handsome Count Konigsmark—brother of that other wicked one who contrived the death of Tom Thynne in Pall Mall—was so brutally arranged by the assassination of the Count, and the immuring of the poor Princess in lifelong confinement. Her name at the foot of the picture has been covered with gold leaf—blotted out, in fact, typically as well as in reality. Yet now that we have made the acquaintance of Sophia Dorothea, her face is not one that inspires confidence; her eyes are those of an intrigante, and the artist, whoever he may have been, has caught the baleful light of one who is ruled by disordered passions. But perhaps the artist painted after the event, and put it—the light, that is—there on purpose.

There is another Sophia Dorothea,

daughter of the last; Queen of Prussia, and the mother of Frederick the Great; but a woman of most forbidding presence, a fact which may palliate, if not excuse, the extreme aversion her husband showed for her. The son of the first-mentioned Sophia is Dapper George, the second of that name, the hero of Dettingen—a very valorous and magnanimous little gentleman, the hero of Dettingen—but for us better known as the hero of one or two little stories about the London Parks. The King, one day seeing the gatekeeper turn away some chance visitors from the Royal gardens, indignantly ordered their admittance. "My people," he said, proudly, "shall go where zey please." And in the same generous spirit, when the head gardener complained of the damage done to some of his choice plants by a heedless public, George replied, laconically, "Plant more."

This is the Prince who is handed down to us by essayists and historians as one who hated "boetry and bainting"; and at whom Pope takes a slash in "The Dunciad":

Still Duncce the second reigns like Duncce the first.

Assuredly, he was not a Mæcenæus for the arts, neither was his minister, Sir Robert Walpole, whose acquaintance we may make in a good portrait by Charles Jervas, which shows the jovial, cynical, sensual face of the Norfolk squire, whom keen good sense and instinct made the great minister of a great kingdom. Walpole is also well represented in an interesting picture, partly by Hogarth, and partly by his father-in-law, Thornhill, showing a little bit of the House of Commons, with the stout, jolly minister in a blue ribbon, talking eagerly with Mr. Speaker Onslow—probably on some point of procedure, for the Clerk of the House turns round to have a word in the discussion. The dramatic action of the piece is very characteristic of Hogarth, to whom the three principal portraits are doubtless due, while Thornhill probably supplied the furniture and accessories, including the rows of sturdy Members in cocked hats.

Even more interesting than King or Minister is Caroline, the Queen, whose hardy, enduring character and cynical wit make her memorable. But her brightness and readiness are not apparent in her portrait by Hudson, where she appears fat and heavy, leaning upon the shoulder of her son, the future

"butcher of Culloden"! Her favourite, and equally cynical, correspondent, Lord Hervey, we shall find in the balcony—just such a finical figure in white velvet, as we might expect from Pope's description:

Let Sporus tremble!

Sporus, that mere white curd of asses' milk.

Pretty Molly Lepel the post's friend, is not represented, nor are any of the chief beauties of the Court; not Mrs. Howard, the lively hostess of Pope and Swift at Marble Hill, and who, with Queen Caroline, appears for a moment in the "Heart of Mid-Lothian"; nor yet the Bellendens—

Madge Bellenden, the fairest of the land,
And smiling Mary, soft and fair as down.

But if we miss the beauties, we have the poets who flattered and followed them. In another room we shall find Mat Prior and Alexander Pope, two excellent portraits by Kneller, probably the best of the artist's works; and John Gay is there by an unknown hand; and we have Jonathan Swift, by Jervas, from the Bodleian, to complete the party.

Another well-known figure of the period is the Princess Amelia, daughter of George the Second, an early example of what we call a fast young lady, who rode, drove, dined, hunted, and played cards with the best, and who lived to an advanced age—a hard-featured, snuffy old woman, who to the last cared more for kennel and stables than for gilded saloons. Of her brother—"poor Fred," hated by father and mother—we have two portraits in youth, but neither very characteristic. Nor does his wife, the Princess Augusta, by Zoffany, with her family about her, including George, the future King, leave any distinct impression. But the same George the Third is a splendid youth as painted by Reynolds, just before his accession—a frank, noble, perhaps stupid, boy, just such a gay lover as rode one day by Holland Park, lighted by the fire of love for Lady Sarah Lennox, who was making hay on the lawn.

But when we come to Sir Joshua Reynolds's period, the whole age seems lighted up by his genius, and the wealth of examples of this great master is the great feature of this Exhibition, just as Holbein was of the Tudors. Facing us, as we enter the south gallery, is the master's great picture of Sarah Siddons as

the Tragic Muse—a noble, inspired, if somewhat idealised, portrait of that great actress and noble woman. And what a lovely face—lovely enough to give one the heartache—is that of another actress, "Mrs. Elizabeth Hartley as Elfrida"! No goddess or muse, indeed, but most charming among women! Here, too, we have lovely Perdita, too—Mary Robinson—of unhappy memory.

Then, among actors, we have David Garrick—not, perhaps, in the artist's best manner. But we have another portrait of Garrick by Hogarth, when the actor appears as author, tickled, apparently, by his own conceit—for he has a broad smile on his face—while his wife leans over him with a very engaging, arch expression, about to take the pen from his fingers.

"A very thoughtless proceeding," pronounces a determined-looking critic, who is accompanied by his wife, and who, perhaps, wishes to guard against a similar indiscretion on her part. "A very thoughtless act, indeed; she is sure to ink his fingers." Here is surely a tribute to the vivid action of the piece, where, if the painter has hardly succeeded with David, he has thrown wonderful life and spirit into the female figure; and after leaving the picture you may feel that you have seen and known Mrs. Garrick.

Garrick suggests Johnson, of whom we have another Reynolds, but not a success as a portrait, and close by we have Goldsmith—a picture which, reproduced in hundreds of prints and engravings, has made poor Goldy's features familiar to all the world. Other literary clubbites by the same hand are the much overrated Edmund Burke and James Boswell, Johnson's inimitable biographer. Barly Gibbon, more like a grazier than a historian, is there, too, by another hand, Romney's; and a portrait of the latter artist by himself, and one of his finest works, is close at hand.

A most brilliant portrait of a brilliant man is Sir Joshua's Richard Brinsley Sheridan, in the prime of his glorious youth, with the humour of the "School for Scandal" curling his beautiful lips. A picture to be seen after this is the celebrated portrait, by Gainsborough, of the future Mrs. Sheridan, then Miss Linley of Bath, with her beautiful brother, full of a wifely loveliness beyond which art cannot go. Then we have the melancholy picture of Sheridan in premature decline—a poor picture by Hickel, but

with "the bottle" plainly if unconsciously expressed by the artist in every feature. From Sheridan we may turn to Sheridan's boon companion, George Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth. What a splendid youth he was, with every promise for the future in his handsome and clever face! It is Gainsborough who paints him, and perhaps the portrait is too flattering. But he was a fine young fellow when he fell in love with Mrs. Fitzherbert, the one true and honest passion of his life. But contrast gentle, lovely Mrs. Fitzherbert, as Gainsborough paints her, with the coarse, brzen-looking Caroline—a bad picture from the Guildhall—and it may be seen how unhappy often enough is the lot of princes.

Of princes and princesses in their daily habit or in robes of State, with diamonds, stars and garters, and all the accessories of their condition, in the Royal room at the New Gallery, there is no end. Venerable, courtly old gentlemen survey these portraits through their gold eye-glasses. Here and there may be one of these faded Royalties who is remembered by people yet living. But among all these Royal portraits there is one honest, sensible, loving, truthful face, not wanting in softness and feminine charm, but distinguished chiefly by its intellectual and sympathetic qualities; and this is the face of the Duchess of Kent, the mother of Queen Victoria, and it is difficult to overrate the influence of this excellent woman upon the characters of her descendants of the Royal house of Guelph.

But after all it is the eighteenth century that we have here in view, and nowhere else, and probably at no other time could we find such a complete representation of the period at the hands of the greatest of its artists. The miniatures here displayed are themselves worth a careful study, as they belong to the palmy days of the most dainty and delicate of arts, and embrace nearly all the celebrated characters of the age. Relics, too, there are, although these are necessarily not so interesting as those of earlier periods. Still many people are pleased to see the cloak—if it is not rather a cape—that Wellington wore at Waterloo and his field-glass—is it possible that the great duke pranced about with a telescope like a mountain gun hanging upon him. A thousand odds and ends connected with Royalty may please others; and the love-tokens that passed between the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert are not without interest.

Good English pottery, too, of the century will be an envy and delight to many.

It is all familiar ground, no doubt, this eighteenth century; we may study it in the print-shop windows—thousands of caricatures, of prints, hundreds of pictures, the labours of essayists and the lighter corps of historians, all have made the age of the Georges almost as well-known to us as our own. But for this very reason the pleasure of a trip to Regent Street is all the greater. There are not strangers or people little known who look down upon us, their lineaments preserved by the great masters of the age. Kneller, Hogarth, Reynolds, Romney, Gainsborough. These are the great magicians who make all the dead and gone of the century alive to us once more.

What a charm there is about the women of the period! The beautiful Gunnings, with all the world at their feet; the lovely Maria Walpole, afterwards peerless among countesses; that most charming of the Spencers, Lady Pembroke; Georgina of Devonshire, whose kiss given to the Westminster butcher and elector has gratified thousands; Lady Hamilton, most beautiful of women, who, beginning as a servant girl, led into willing captivity the greatest sea captain of the age; sprightly Kitty Fisher, and Harriet Mellon, lively and bustling actress, who captivated Counts the banker, and died Duchess of Saint Albans.

Of the varied characters of the age, who is not pleased to meet with lifelike and authentic portraits of such as Chesterfield, of the "Letters," by Hudson; of Henry Fox; of his son, Charles James; of George Selwyn and Horace Walpole; of Canning, noble in youth as in manhood of Beckford, the magnificent; of Warren Hastings, the hero or culprit of the great trial; of Captain Bligh, the tyrant of the "Bounty," and the would-be autocrat of New South Wales; of Captain Cook, the discoverer of the Cannibal Islands? If you want a model of the old British Admiral, storming and blowing on sea and shore, there is Reynolds's admirable portrait of Boscawen for your need. And who is not pleased to make the acquaintance of Charles Dibdin, who has just the jolly, tarry flavour about him which you would have expected from his songs?

And the poets, what an admirable and instructive series we have here! Pope and his friends; woezy Thomson, of "The Seasons"; Cowper, by Romney—the face is

a revelation for much that puzzles one in the poet's life; Gray, of the Elegy; Mason, almost forgotten. And with these the more modern schools, Southey and Shelley; Tom Campbell, the bonny Scot; the great wizard of the North; Keats and Coleridge, the latter unexpectedly sleek and ecclesiastical in appearance.

Then we have the novelists. Richardson, of "Clarissa"; Fielding, of "Tom Jones," "Humphrey Clinker," "Evelina Burney"; William Godwin, of "Caleb Williams"; to say nothing of Sterne, of "Tristram Shandy," whose peaked and wicked-looking face not all Sir Joshua's art can make attractive.

Here, in fine, is a grand representative gathering which everybody ought to see, brought together as it is from the palaces of Royalty, from the great houses of the nobility, from halls, and colleges, and guilds, from the collections of merchant princes, and of old historic families; a gathering which can only be seen once in a lifetime, and which once dispersed, as it will necessarily be after the fourth of April, can never be brought together again in its entirety.

KING FROST.

EVEN the most argumentative person could find nothing to quarrel with in the statement that King Frost has had a "regular, downright, royal" reign this winter. He came to the throne about November the twenty-fifth, 1890, and died a quiet death, as we fondly were allowed to hope for two days, on January the twelfth, 1891. He had almost reached his Jubilee; but very few of us were sorry to believe that he should have been deposed. But it was a false and short-lived hope, and we had to begin again telling each other that it was a good old-fashioned winter, and trying to believe that we were enjoying it; while, even if we were wrapped up in warm clothes we could not get warm. And what about those whom the frost threw out of work? Surely for them King Frost must be a tyrant more cruel than almost any despot in history.

It may not be uninteresting to go through, as rapidly as possible, the records of the good old-fashioned winters, and see what they were, and how long they lasted; although we shall not find many to beat this one. In olden days the inhabitants of London did not, at all events, suffer

from the carbon-laden fogs in which we have been existing lately.

It is of no use taking very early records, for we are dealing with doubtful authority when we dabble with early times, and up to the fifteenth century there are many hard frosts chronicled. Taking the great frosts after that, the chief point of which chroniclers take notice is the freezing of the Thames. That this should happen now about London it is almost impossible to imagine—the broad spans of the bridges giving very little opportunity for the ice to collect—but in 1564, which is the first “good, old-fashioned” winter we will notice, the Thames was frozen over from London Bridge to Westminster. In this case, however, the frost was short, though severe, and only lasted a fortnight.

Stow and Hollinshed state — on the authority of Timbs's “Curiosities of London”—that, on New Year's Eve, “People went over and alongt the Thames on the ice from London Bridge to Westminster. Some plaied at the football as boldlie then as if it had been on the drie land; diverse of the Court, being then at Westminster, shot dailie at prickes set up upon the Thames; and the people, both men and women, went on the Thames in greater numbers than in anie street of the City of London. On the third daie of January, at night, it began to thaw, and on the fifth there was no ice to be seene between London Bridge and Lambeth, which sudden thaw caused great floods and high-waters, that bare doune bridges and houses, and drowned manie people in England.”

In 1608 there was a frost which lasted almost four months; and again the Thames was the scene of a fair. This is described in Howe's continuation of Stow: “The 8th of December began a hard frost, and continued unto the 15th of the same, and then thawed; and the 22nd of December it began again to freeze violently, so as divers persons went half-way over the Thames upon the ice; and the 30th of December, at every ebbe, many people went quite over the Thames in divers places, and so continued until the 3rd of January.” The ice lasted till the second of February.

In 1683-1684 coaches ran on the river from Westminster to the Temple. This frost is described in Timbs's book from various sources. Maitland says that the frost “congealed the river Thames to that degree, that another city, as it were, was

erected thereon; where, by the great number of streets and shops, with their rich furniture, it represented a great fair, with a variety of carriages, and diversions of all sorts; and, near Whitehall, a whole ox was roasted on the ice.” While Evelyn thus describes it: “The frost continuing more and more severe, the Thames before London was still planted with boothes in formal streetes, all sorts of trades and shops, furnished and all full of commodities, even to a printing presse, where the people and the ladies tooke a fancy to have their names printed on the Thames; this humour tooke so universally, that 'twas estimated the printer gained five pounds a day for printing a line onely, at sixpence a name, besides what he got by ballads, etc. . . .”

In 1740 the Thames was again frozen, and an ox was roasted whole on the ice. In this year several people seem to have lost their lives by the treacherous ice, one of whom—Doll, a noted pippin-woman—has been thus handed down to Fame:

Doll every day had walked these treacherous roads;
Her neck grew warp'd beneath autumnal loads
Of various fruit: she now a basket bore.
That head, alas! shall basket bear no more.
Each booth she frequent past, in quest of gain,
And boys with pleasure heard her thrilling strain.
Ah, Doll! all mortals must resign their breath,
And industry itself submit to Death!
The cracking crystal yields; she sinks, she dies;
Her head, chopt off from her lost shoulders, flies.
Pippins, she cried; but death her voice confounds,
And pip, pip, pip, along the ice resounds.

There was printing on the Thames in this year, as well as in 1683-4. A copy of one of the handbills then issued was recently sent by a correspondent to the “Echo,” and ran as follows:

Upon the frost in the year 1739-40.
Behold the liquid T.H.A.M.E.S now frozen oer!
That lately SHIPS of mighty Burden bore.
Here you may PRINT your Name though cannot
Write
'Cause numbed with Cold. 'Tis done with great
Delight.
And lay it by; That AGES yet to come
May see what THINGS upon the Ice were done.

Elizabeth and Sarah Warner,
Printed on the ICE upon the Thames at Queen-
hithe, January the 23rd, 1739-40.

In 1814 occurred a frost, which began— as we are accustomed nowadays for frosts to begin—with a dense fog. In the breaking-up of this frost several people seem to have been drowned in the Thames. Since then there have been several severe frosts, notably in 1860, but the Thames does not seem to have been completely frozen over. Of course, there are many

more severe winters chronicled, but these seem to have been the most severe. Anyhow, we need not be afraid to boast of ours of 1890-91, for we have had all traffic on the river stopped, and the tide-way itself is full of floating ice, some pieces measuring almost thirty feet long.

But there is one thing we have not suffered from up till now in London, and that is a really heavy fall of snow. It has taxed our vestries to the utmost to clear away the little we have had. Let us hope they will not be called upon to show how clever they are; but there is no good in trying to prophesy what may happen before this article appears.

But enough of records, and chronicles, and old times, and let us come down to to-day and turn our attention on a body of people who do enjoy frosts—the skaters. It has for the last few weeks seemed that every other person in the streets has been carrying akates, and is bound for some ice-bound water, whether it be the preserve of some skating club or the smallest pond.

Now skating is not, perhaps, the safest amusement in the world, and care and precautions are necessary. Help must be at hand in case there should be any accident, and though, of course, the harder and stronger the frost the thicker and safer will be the ice, still even with the hardest and strongest ice accidents will happen. In Metropolitan waters this care falls upon the Royal Humane Society instead of, as ought to be the case, on some public body, and a source of great expense the society finds it in such a winter as this. Up to the sixth of January they had paid over one hundred pounds in wages to their icemen—not a very large amount, it is true, but large for a society which is supported by voluntary contributions, and which only just pays its way.

The Royal Humane Society was instituted in 1774, "to collect and circulate the most approved and effectual methods for recovering persons apparently drowned and dead; to provide suitable apparatus in and around the Metropolis for rescuing persons from drowning; to bestow rewards for the preservation and restoration of life; and to encourage swimming exercises at public schools and training ships with reference to saving life from drowning." While of these the second is what we have most to do with at present, we may as well have a glance at the remainder. According to the last report issued, during the year five hundred and thirty-eight

persons were rewarded for saving or attempting to save life throughout the British Isles, India, and the Colonies, the rewards in all being as follows: one gold medal; fifteen silver medals with certificates; one hundred and sixty-five bronze medals with certificates; two bronze clasps; two hundred and sixteen testimonials on vellum; eighty-seven testimonials on parchment; and fifty-three pecuniary rewards with certificates. Competitions were held at twenty-eight schools in diving practice, and a silver medallion and certificate were given at each. Life-buoys and drags were maintained throughout the year, and nearly three hundred places on the Thames, the Lea, and the Regent's, Surrey, and Grand Junction Canals.

Let us now go to the Serpentine and see what preparations are made for the reception of any possible accidents. The Receiving House of the Royal Humane Society is half-way down the water on the north side, and is a nice, comfortable-looking building, but cold and bare in this wintry weather. Ringing the bell, we are admitted by the Superintendent, and can soon see the arrangements. There are two rooms for the patients—one for men, and one for women. Each room contains a bath where hot water can be obtained at a moment's notice; a bed with the mattress on; a compartment which can in the same way be heated; two or three ordinary beds; dressing gowns for the patients; and last, but not least, a table on which the patient can be laid while his arms can be worked to produce artificial respiration according to Dr. Sylvester's method. In one of the rooms lies the spare stock of icemen's uniforms—coats with badge, hats, cork jackets and hand-line.

Now let us go out into the Superintendent's office, where we can see the models of all the apparatus used in saving life from ice accidents, and from boating and bathing accidents, too; for this place is open all the year round, and the Society has the care of the bathers in the Serpentine. Each iceman has a certain beat, and is provided with a hand-ladder, which may be useful in slight accidents. In addition, round the Serpentine are placed long folding ladders, the end of which, when pushed along the ice towards a hole, drops over and hangs down into the water, thus affording any one who has had the misfortune to fall in an easy foothold.

Ordinary life-buoys, which need no description, also meet our eye, and ice-boats. These are ordinary boats, provided with three runners, so that they will rest on the top of very thin ice—indeed, the Superintendent tells us that one of these boats carrying two men will rest on one inch of ice.

The most curious things amongst these models are those of various machines for enabling the unpractised hand to throw lines to people in danger. These ingenious contrivances—whether they ever survived the test of trial does not appear—consist mostly of a line wound round a stick, to which are attached wheels or a ball, so that it may be rolled in the direction required; but it does not appear obvious what would happen if the ice were not quite smooth.

There is one more thing to look at in the office, and that is the book containing the records of skating kept by the Royal Humane Society. This book goes back as far as 1859-60, and contains a record of all accidents that have been treated by the Society's ice-men since then. What a strange medley of names and of dwelling places! In one page we come across people from Drury Lane, Fulham, Hampstead, Kilburn, and Kensington! The authorities require four inches of ice on the Serpentine now before it is thrown open, but in former days they do not seem to have been so particular, and there have been days when some two or three hundred people have disported themselves on only an inch and a quarter of ice.

Another curious thing about this book is that the number of skaters has greatly increased in these later years. Perhaps we don't work quite so hard as we used, but certainly there are always plenty of working people who can apparently afford to have a day off when they want it.

Having got all we can from the Receiving House, let us go out, and, first of all, finish our inspection of the Royal Humane Society's property by going down to the Boat House. They possess three boats here for the protection of the bathers. Of these, in very hot weather, they have, between five and eight in the morning, five and six thousand, and the same number in the evening! Some few foolish souls persist in bathing all the year round, and even during the recent Arctic weather have taken their daily plunge through a hole in the ice. These boats are ordinary rowing boats, but somewhat long, having a long

platform in the stern, on which half drowned persons can be laid and operated upon immediately for resuscitation. By the boats in the Boat House hangs a stretcher for conveying persons to the Receiving House, and various drags for recovering sunken bodies—some on poles, some, like lobster-pots, a series on a line.

That is all the equipment of the Royal Humane Society, so let us take a walk round the Serpentine, and, resisting the cries of "Who'll 'ave a pair on for an hour!" take pleasure in other people's performances. What a strange medley of people! Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, gentleman, apothecary, ploughboy, thief—they are all here. And the akates they use—from the latest fashion to an old pair which looks as if it must have been the originator of all akates! Here we have a long line of men and boys in quick succession tearing along at full speed, while here we have a select family party, with a little ring swept all to themselves, which seems to be theirs alone by right of occupation. Here is a man with a circle of people round him, showing off. How pleased we all are when he makes a mistake and sits down, all unexpectedly to himself!

How good-humoured they all are! See this slide here—men, boys, and girls, all going down one after another. If one falls down, no matter. It is a case of try again, and look smiling. Here comes a girl down, but the man behind, coming like an express train after a local, helps her on, and off they go again.

So the skating and sliding goes on up till dark, and even after, up till eleven o'clock, and in the evening it is a weird sight. Most of the skaters carry torches, which, with the flare of the lamps of the "'ave a pair on brigade," make the Serpentine brighter than it is on a good many winter days. The gentleman who seizes upon you and deposits you in a chair to fix on your skates, does not have an extensive stock-in-trade—one chair and one gimlet—and the business does not seem to require a large capital. One enterprising merchant has erected two poles with a cross bar, and appears to have brought all his household goods, for he runs to two chairs, a stool, and a form. How many Lord Mayor's Shows has that form attended in its business capacity!

But it is cold standing looking on, and so we make our way home, fully assured that we English people do not take our

pleasures sadly, so far, at least, as skating goes, but merrily and cheerfully, and, to crown all, with wonderful good temper and good humour.

A NEAR SHAVE

A COMPLETE STORY.

I AM but a common man, with next to no book learnin'; certainly nothin' like as much as is wantin' to make anything proper to put in print. Nevertheless, I'm goin' to do my best to tell a story of summat that happened to me, and which, beyond all doubt, was more than a little bit out of the common run of things. And while you're listenin' to me—I mean, while you're a-readin'—you must please think of me as Amos Kerr, a rough collier, who's spent the best part of his life—boy and man—at the bottom of a coal-pit.

It ain't a cheerful sort of life, as you may easily guess; and if folks thought the matter out they'd be ready to make excuses for us, if, when we get up into the fresh air, we are a bit rougher and unstidder in our ways than most men. I don't say we're bound to be wild; but I want to put it so that you'll remember there is two sides to this question as well as to most others.

I warn't so bad a lad as some I worked among. I could drink, and swear, and gamble my money away at cards and pigin' flyin'; but for all that I might have been a great deal worse than I was if it hadn't been for Margaret Kerr, and for the great love I'd had for her ever since she had been a little toddlin' thing of eight and me a big, clumsy lad of thirteen. You see, there were five years between us, and we'd grown up as brother and sister, for her father and mine were brothers. I should like to tell you what Meg was like, only I know I couldn't never find the words that would suit her curly, chestnut hair and her big, blue eyes, and what could I say of her sweet mouth and the bloom on her soft cheeks, and the little dimple that came when she smiled; and of how she looked when I grieved her, which I did only too often from the very first; only, thank Heaven, I never vexed her so bad that she left off caring for me?

I was left an orphan at thirteen. My mother had died at my birth, and my father was killed in a Welsh colliery; so, as was natral, I went to live with my uncle, who kept the "Cross Keys" inn,

at Cannock. He got me a job at the West Cannock Colliery, and so it came about that I grew up with my cousin, Margaret. My uncle, Job Kerr, was a well-doin' man. He kept his public very strict, and wouldn't encourage no evil way there. He was used to say that no honest man could hope to thrive on the money that wastrils and losels spent on makin' beasts of theirselves. And no doubt he was right, for his house had a good name, and he got on year by year, till he'd bought a bit of land out Hedgeford way and a few shares in some of the new collieries.

"It's the duty of every man to be savin'," he would say, "both as regards his old age and as regards his children. We've only got Meg left, but that don't hinder me being as careful as if all three of the bairns had lived i'stead of only one. Meg'll make a real tidy wife for any man—brought up as she's been—even if her husband got nothing along of her; but she won't go from her home empty-handed, and, therefore, I don't mean to give her to a man as I don't think well of."

This he said so often that I knew his sentiments off by heart, and I knew, too, that he didn't think so very well of me. No more did my aunt, who was even harder to please than him. Perhaps you'll say that I ought to have kep' straight, seein' that my lot was thrown among them as held themselves above all low ways; but accordin' to my experience, things in general, and lads in pertickler, don't always go azactly as they oughter do, in spite of all that's said to the contrary. There was plenty of evil put in my way, and, if I stood out again' it four days, there came a fifth when I made a mess o' matters.

Now, my uncle and aunt took too little account o' the good spell, and a deal too much o' those wretched times when—with a chap I liked 'ticing me along, and a chap I hated jeerin' and sneerin' at me—I did what I was sorry for afterwards, only couldn't undo. But I suppose they were pretty patient with me, for I lived over ten years in their house; which made me three-and-twenty and Maggie eighteen, and all those ten 'ears I had gone on lovin' her more and more every day; but I had not spoken of it, for my earnin's were naught to speak of, and, as I've shown, my uncle wasn't like to have let her listen to me. Yet they let her go for a stroll with me of a Sunday evening up on to the Chase, and there we'd sit us down on the

short grass and heather, and look across at the sun setting behind the Wrekin and the little villages with a soft cloud of blue smoke over them here and there in the valley. Then I would tell Margaret all I could tell her of what had befallen me in the week, and she would talk to me as no one else had the knack, and I would walk home beside her listenin' to her and makin' up my mind to good resolves, which I didn't always keep, and which I was mortal ashamed of breakin'; but who knows what would have become of me if I had never made them?

All that time — though I often told her there was no one in the world I cared for except her, yet I never tried to win a promise from her, or to find out if she really spoke all that was in her heart when she said:

"You are the only brother I have, Amos; so I must love you as much as I should have loved the little brother and sister who died before I was born."

In the winter we used to sit together in the little room behind the bar, where only very old customers ever took the liberty of comin'—Meg with her work, and me with a book, which I used to try and spell out with a helpin' hand from her. It was my uncle who served in the bar, and my aunt helped him on a busy night. Meg never went there—that was one o' the ways she'd been brought up careful. It was her work to see to the lodgers' rooms and their cookin', when there were lodgers—which was oftener than not. She and I often had the little parlour all to ourselves, and if any one came in I was apt to feel sorely put out, as if no one else had a right there; only, nat'rally, I couldn't say aught about such a thing.

It was when Meg was about eighteen that this all began to change a little. Firstly, I could see that my aunt and uncle were gettin' shy of our walkin' about together, and were doin' all they could to hinder it, quietly; and, nextly, there came Mr. Ralph Henderson to turn every-thing topsy-turvy.

I'm not goin' to pit myself in any way agensat Mr. Henderson; if I was to him, and perhaps others, would think I had taken leave of my senses, for he was one of the engineers at the West Can'k Colliery, while I was only a working miner. He was a man about thirty years of age, tall, and well favoured in the face and build; but, for all his fine, gentleman ways, and his smart clothes, and his carry-

all-before-him sort of air, in one thing he and I ran on the same level, only he was far behind me—yes, certainly, far behind, for he couldn't never have loved Margaret Kerr near so well as I did.

He came to West Can'k with a great notion of his own importance about him, and when some one recommended him to lodge at the "Cross Keys," he'd more'n half a mind to turn up his nose at the idea; but lodgin's bein' scarce, he came to see about it, and once he had seen Meg, his mind was made up. He took the best bed-room, and another room to sit in, which he didn't often use, for he purferred sittin' elsewhere.

From the hour he took up his abode at the "Cross Keys" he was just what he liked to be—that is, cock of the walk. It was Mr. Henderson this, and Mr. Henderson that, and such a fuss about doin' his cookin' right, and such fads about all that had to do with him, that I was reg'lar sick of his very name. Perhaps you'll think I was jealous of him; but that wasn't it. My mind had been made up about dislikin' him as soon as I set eyes on him.

He wasn't a favoright in general, neither, for he'd a hard temper and a bitter tongue. It may have been the shadow of what was to come that fell so dark betwixt me and him; I'm not cliver enough to make out sich things; but, whether or no, I took again' him before he ever saw Margaret, and I make no doubt he had much the same feeling for me, though he wouldn't have condescended to own it.

I'd been stiddy for a long spell then. I'd been wondering if, now that she and I were both of an age to think of sweet-hearting, I might work my way up a bit, so as to count for more in my uncle's sight. But when I came home night after night, and found Mr. Henderson sitting just where I used to sit, with a good cigar between his teeth—which he always asked Meg's leave to light—talking away, and makin' hisself as agreeable as never was, and lookin' at me as if he wondered how I had the cheek to come and sit down with the likes of him—then I used to have a one-too-many sort of feelin', and after I'd eat my supper in the back place, I began to keep out of his way. I'd slink out o' the back door, and get rid of the time as best I could, and not allays to my own credit.

I needn't tell you how miserable I was in them days and nights. At my work I

went over and over the good times we'd had before Mr. Henderson got in the light, and from that to the grudge I had against him for his stuck-up ways. Then I'd puzzle my head whether Meg cared most for me or for him. With him she was rather stand-off and quiet; it was plain to see she kep' him at a distance; when he talked to her she answered him respectful, as if she allays bore in mind that he was above her in station, and when he was not there she scarce spoke of him at all. Sometimes I'd tell myself she did all this because she didn't care a rap about him, and yet couldn't venture to send him about his business; but other times I turned the matter the other way, and felt sure she fought shy of him because she thought more of him than of them as she treated freer and easier.

With sich thoughts in my head all day, I felt gloomy and sulky o' nights, and when I sneaked out o' the back door, as I've said, it was to drown them if I could, and no matter how.

At last, one wet Sunday evening in the winter, when my uncle and aunt had gone to church, and Meg was stayin' to keep house, I made up my mind that now or never the time had come for me to find out how matters were to turn betwixt us, and whether I was to be happy or miserable for the rest o' my days. Mr. Henderson was gone to Stafford for the day, so I knew as I opened the parlour door that the coast would be clear of him. There was no light in the room but the fire, which wasn't very bright, neither, and for half a minute I thought she wasn't there. But she spoke out of the duskiness near the winder.

"Come in, Amos," she said, "it's a nasty wet night outside, ain't it?"

"Why, Maggia, you're all in the dark," I said, as I groped my way past the chairs; "wouldn't it be more cheerful-like if we lit up?"

"Just as you please, Amos—if you don't think the firelight's good enough for talking by," she made answer.

Now I wanted to see her face better than I could by the flickering light o' the blaze; besides, it wasn't like her to be sittin' so—it seemed unnat'ral; so I turned on the gas and put a match to it.

"What were you doing in the dark, lassie?" I began, as I sat down beside her. It was hard to make a start on what I wanted to say—that did as well as anything else.

"I was thinkin', Amos," she said.

"And what were you thinkin' of, lassie? Was it, mayhap, about me?"

"I was thinkin' o' many things, Amos, and you among 'em," she said.

"That's all right," I answered: "I'm glad to hear you haven't give up thinkin' about me."

"Why, Amos," she said, "what do you say that for? Am I one to change toward them I care for?"

She looked at me as she said it, and if I could speak as scholarsds can, I'd tell you how different her look was from any other I ever saw; but I can't, so I won't make a mess of it by trying.

"Meg, my lass," I began, "I've got summat on my mind—summat I must say to you." I leant nearer to her as I spoke, and put my hand on her two. "Let me hold your hands whille I tell you, Meggie, though after all there's no need for any tellin'; you must 'a know'd it all along."

I could hear my voice went queer and quivery as I spoke, and I could see in her face that she heard it, too, for she looked a bit scared like, and drew back from me.

"Amos," she said, in a sort of hurry, "I couldn't be quite sure of what you want to say to me; but I can pretty well guess. Don't-ee say it, Amos; it'll be better left unsaid."

"What do you mean by that, Meg?" I cried, firing up. "What I've got to say, I'll say—and you must hear it, becoss there's naught but your answer that can settle it."

But she stopped me again.

"Don't be vexed, Amos," she said, softly; "don't take it amiss that I cut you short in what you've begun. Listen to this. As we are we are good friends—arn't we, Amos? just as brother and sister should be; but you might say words, and so might I, that would put all that wrong, and then it 'ud be very hard to pull it to rights again. Can't you understand why I stop you, Amos? It's better for us both—I'm sure it is."

She was right, as she mostly was when we differed, and I was wrong. I knew it at the time, but I wouldn't be shut up.

"Margaret Kerr," I said, "don't say you won't hear me—you shall; it's my right to be heard. Do you think I'm going to drag on day after day, without tellin' you that I don't mean to be brother and sister any longer—that I want you for my wife? Why, lass, it begun ten years ago, what I feel for you did, and it will

last all my life. What can I do but speak of it?"

"And what can I do, Amos," she began, sadly, "but tell you the truth, since you will make me put it quite plain to you? Wife of yours I never can be; my brother you've been as far back as I can remember, and that's all you ever can be."

I'd guessed as much; I'd felt beforehand what her answer was nearly sure to be; but now that I heard it in so many words it put me beside myself. I jumped up and stood over her.

"All you ever can be," I said, after her, "then who's going to take the other place? You've got some one, else why should you know so surely that it can't be me? Is it that pretty-faced, glib-tongued, dandified Henderson, who's always dangling after you, that you've fixed on? You'd needn't say nothin'. It's my turn to guess right now, and want no answer."

I tell all this just as it happened. I know I was a brute, but I make no excuses for myself—I was so angry that I strove to make her cower and tremble. But she didn't—she wasn't that sort. She got up and faced me.

"Amos," she said, "suppose I cared for you as you've asked me to: would you think it fair for another man to come and put me in the wrong for lovin' you?"

"I don't know what I should think if you did care for me," I cried; "the thing is, you don't. I'm not fine gent enough; I'm a dirty, rough workman. I've got into bad ways, and you know it. But he's no better at bottom than I am. He's got the devil of a temper, and he don't love you half as well as I do."

I might ha' said more, but the door opened sharply, and some one spoke from the threshold. It was Mr. Henderson.

"What is this?" he asked, just as if he was boss of the place. "What does this mean?" And he looked from Margaret to me, and from me to Margaret.

"It means that you've come back sooner than we expected you, and sooner than you was wanted," I said.

Him at least I could anger, and I meant to do it.

"Not quite so soon as I was wanted, I should say," he said, as he walked across to where Margaret stood; "but now I have come, I'll trouble you to go and make this tipsy row in a more suitable place."

"Then you'll trouble me to no purpose," I made answer. "I'm no more tipsy than you are yourself, and there's no

man living shall order me out of this room."

"Then if you won't go for asking civilly," he went on, "I shall go so far as to turn you out. I don't allow any one to speak to the girl who has promised to be my wife in the tone you have spoken. There's the door, and the quicker you are on the other side of it the better for you."

Now I don't want to throw the blame on him, at least, not all of it. We hated one another, and he had bested me in the one thing I wanted most in the world. It seems to me that there'd be a deal to say of how things stood at that minute betwixt him and me, if I had larnin' to put it as p-shape, which I haven't.

Meg did not speak. She stood with her eyes on the ground and her bosom heavin'. I could see she was unhappy, and all because o' me; but I hadn't the right to comfort her, and I knew she couldn't take my part nor do anything for me if I stayed there, yet I couldn't demean myself to do his biddin', not even for her sake.

When he'd waited a minute, he said:

"Well, did you hear?"

"I heard right enough," I said, "and if you want my answer, there it is."

I sprang at him as I spoke, with my fist doubled, and my arm raised.

Now if any one had ever told me that I could have been such a brute in front of my little Margaret, I should have sworn it was impossible; but at that moment all I wanted was to strike him down, and to see her crying for fright. He wasn't prepared, neither—even he thought better things of me—and I could have give him a blow on the head that would have half killed him, only she was too quick for me. She put herself between us, holdin' him back with one hand, while she laid the other on my uplifted arm, and still she didn't speak. She only looked at me. Her face was as pale as death, her lips trembled, and her eyes were swimming with tears as she fixed them on mine. It was such a look as might have tamed a wild beast.

"Amos!" she said, in a faint, far-off sort of tone, "Amos!"

That was all; then down went my arm, my fist unclenched, and I forgot that he could see I was conquered. I forgot everything except that I loved her, and that in the depths of her eyes I could see she cared for me still, though she wasn't to be my wife. I tried to say something, but

when I opened my lips nothin' came but a great sob. Then I turned round, and went out of the room, and out of the house, and away out of Cannock altogether. I wasn't goin' to stay there and see Margaret Kerr the wife of Mr. Henderson.

After that I went right away up North, and got work at a Wigan colliery. I heard nothink of any one, for I called myself by another name, and took good care not to let any one know what had become of me. Sometimes, though, I had a bitter longing to go back and see her once again, for I couldn't leave off lovin' her, nor put any one in the place I'd wanted her to take; but I got the better of my home-sickness, and time went on, till it was a matter o' seven 'ear since I'd turned my back on Cannock.

Then one day I was took greatly aback by some one as clapped me on the back, and called me by my own name. It was one of my old mates from the West Can'k pita, and the sight of him made me all of a sudden hungrier for news of her than ever I'd been.

"Come and have 'arf-a-pint for the sake of old times, Amos," says he; and you may think if I went nothink loth.

He hadn't come straight from Cannock; he'd been knockin' about from one pit to another for a couple of years. Nevertheless, he'd plenty to tell me, and I let him go on without venturin' to try and get him to what my ears were burnin' to hear.

"And then there was that little lass you'd used to walk with on Sunday evenings," he said, at last; "her as lived at the 'Cross Keys,' on the Stafford Road. You ain't forgot her among the Lancashire wenches, have you?"

"I warn't likely to have forgot her," I said; "we were kinsfolk."

"Then most likely you know what become of her?" he said.

"I knows nothink wathiver," I answered; and I tipped up my mug over my face, so that he shouldn't see if I turned colour.

"Well, you remember young Henderson," he went on, "a nasty sort of chap, in the West Can'k pit? Well, him and her got married, and there was a deal o' talk about the marriage. Some folks said he oughter done better for hisself."

"'Twas 'cother way about, I should say," I put in.

"So should I," he made answer; "but his family thought otherwise. They wouldn't have nothink to do with the lass,

nor with him. That riled him sorely, and as she was nearest to him, she had to bear the brunt of it."

"She was a high-spirited lass," I said; "she wasn't one he could bully. I expect she learnt him better, didn't she?"

"She didn't, my lad. It seems she were greatly wrapped up in him, and when he began to be unkind to her and neglect her, she couldn't bear it. She couldn't bear it; it broke her heart."

"What do you mean?" I called out. I could scarce keep my head.

"I mean she pined away and died," he said. "If you'd stuck to her, she might ha' been livin' still."

"You know nothink about it, mate," I said. "And what became of yon brute of a Henderson?"

"Oh, he's at West Can'k still. He's head engineer now at two or three pits, and he's married a fine new wife what drives her pair of ponies."

Then he told me a lot more; but I paid no heed. My head was full of one thought—how I could be even with the scamp as had broken my darlin's heart. All that night I lay a-thinkin', and in the mornin' my mind was made up. I would punish him as he deserved—as Heaven ought to have punished him already, I said to myself. That week end I jacked my job at Wigan, and took the train to Cannock; and on the Monday I went to the pit and found out all about Mr. Henderson: how he came to his office and when he went away, and what road he took; and all without seemin' too much to ask questions. He'd long ago left off livin' in lodgin's, and had lately rented a big, fine house far out on the Chase, and every evening he rode there on his cob along the lonely Chase lanes. Perhaps poor Meg's bit o' money counted for summat in this finery, which she wasn't grand enough for.

It was the month of November, when the days are short and gloomy, and by five o'clock that Monday afternoon it were quite dark—so dark that, if I hadn't known my way on the Chase very well I couldn't have found the place where I meant to be on the look-out for Mr. Henderson. It was a lonely lane which led from the main road to his house, and there, under the shelter of a holly-bush, on a stony slope where he'd have to pull his cob in, and go gently, I stood and listened until I should hear him comin' along. In my right hand I'd got a loaded revolver, and my finger was on the trigger; that was what I was

goin' to punish him with for breakin' Maggie Kerr's heart.

I went through it all as I stood there on the damp grass of the roadside—how the horse would gallop off when he fell; and how he would be found in the morning with a bullet in his heart, and the life gone out of him; and of the joy I should feel that he had paid me at last. It did not trouble me to think that his blood would be on my head for ever and ever; I only said to myself that by Heaven's law his life was owing for hers, and that I would be the one to do her justice.

He was a long time comin'. The clouds cleared off and the stars came out. So much the better. I was hidden where I stood, and he would come riding over the hill against the sky, so that I could make no mistake about him. At last a horse came trottin' along the main road and into the lane. I heard it come nearer and nearer, and I strained my eyes all I could to make positive it was him and no other. Yes, sure enough it was Henderson. I could see him quite plain from my shelter, as he drew rein to go down the hill. He came carefully, holdin' up his horse, and thinkin' of no worse accident than a stumble over a loose stone. Another three seconds and he would be level with me. My heart thumped inside me like a sledge hammer; the blood fled to my head with a giddy rush. I shut my eyes for half a second to collect myself, and, as I opened them, I raised my arm to shoot.

But I didn't press the trigger, for in that second I had stood with my eyes closed, some one had come betwixt him and me, standin' close up to me, with one hand on my uplifted arm, and, as surely as I tell it you, it was Margaret Kerr, lookin' just as she had looked that last time I had seen her, fixin' her eyes on mine with the big tears swimmin' in them. Her face was as pale as death, but not paler than it had been then, and her sweet mouth seemed drawn with pity. As her hand fell on my arm, a cold thrill ran over me. I could not stir nor speak—neither did her lips move; yet there seemed to ring in my ears a far-off sound of her voice calling my name. My arm dropped to my side, and we stood there—she and I—until down at the bottom of the hill the horse began to trot again. Ralph Henderson had got away with his life, and there was no blood on my head after all. Then I put out my hands to take hold of her—

but there was no one. I was alone in the winter night—

I'm a strong man, and no dastard, but who can wonder that I sank down there and then, like a weak woman, to the ground? I heard my pistol go off as I fell, and there was at the same time an awful burnin' pain through my body. Then I remember no more.

When I came to myself I was lying on a bed in the Stafford Infirmary. I couldn't ask all the questions that came into my head for I was too weak; but bit by bit I learnt how I had been found by the roadside, nearly dead with cold and loss of blood, and how I had been taken to the hospital and cared for. I told nothing myself, though I had many thoughts as I lay there week after week getting well. Some things I pondered over which I can't speak of, for the same reason I've give once or twice before; but there was one thought that stayed by me all the time, which was that Margaret must ha' cared for me still, else why should she ha' come to save me from the deadly deed I was just about? You needn't say she came for his sake—if she had, he'd ha' been the one to see her, which he didn't, for he rode on and never knew what had been hangin' over him nor how he got by safe.

The spring was coming on when I got my discharge from the hospital.

"Let it be a lesson to you how you go about with loaded firearms, my man," the doctor said, the last time I saw him; "we've pulled you through, you see, but it was a nearer shave than you think for."

"I'm much obliged to you, sir," I made answer; but I didn't tell him that it was a deal a nearer shave than even he was aware of.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT Friday was a fine autumn day; but on the morrow the rain had returned. Beatrix had finished her breakfast when Sir Everard came down, and was busy writing notes in a pocket-book, with her hat on.

"You are very early," he remarked, feeling justly injured, for he was punctual

to time; nine o'clock, their invariable breakfast-hour, was just striking, and the breakfast-table looked horribly desolate with her empty cup.

"The train is at 9.20," she answered, rather abstractedly, for she was adding up a sum.

"You are surely not going to Coaliquay on such a day as this!" he cried, almost angrily.

"The day doesn't matter; I am not going to walk there. I must go as I have appointments."

"It is absolute nonsense. I cannot allow such a thing; you will catch your death of cold."

"Indeed, I shall not; I am not such a tender plant."

"Beatrice, you must not go," he said, determinedly, exasperated by the determined way in which she went on with her calculations and lists.

"But I really must," she returned, looking up with alarm and appeal in her face, that were surely out of place where nothing more important than dentists and dress-makers were concerned. "I shall not take cold. I have my very warmest and most watertight things on. There are plenty of cabs to be had there. How can I catch cold?"

"It is simply preposterous," he persisted; "you cannot go."

"Everard, think of the dentist's time—and the poor servants coming to see me," she urged, almost tearfully. Her eagerness seemed extraordinarily out of proportion with her errand.

"Send them telegrams. There are plenty of days coming; your teeth don't look as if they were in a very precarious condition."

"And would you have me wait till they did look it? There is really a little hole in one; the whole tooth will turn black if it is not stopped in time. Would you like to see me with black teeth—like Madge Singleton's?"

The mention of the Singletons instantly recalled the opera to him, and his suspicions of the dark stranger, who might have been an Italian; but he put them aside. She would surely not disobey his expressed wish, and go to the opera. His confidence in her obedience was greatly strengthened by remembering that she could not go in the afternoon. Matinées were unheard of at Coaliquay.

"Beatrice, once for all, I forbid you to go," he said, sternly.

She dropped her notes and stared at him in utter consternation—not in anger nor disappointment.

"Don't do that!" she cried, in a scared way that turned his blood quite cold with dread. "Everard, I cannot disobey you; but please—please let me go to-day!"

Her instances naturally doubled his determination that she should not go. His suspicions were of the vaguest; he could formulate nothing; but he could not help seeing that she was keeping something back, and he felt convinced that her secret was connected with the stranger of yesterday. Her face was flushed, her eyes were shining through unshed tears. People don't usually cry at missing an appointment with a dentist—quite the other way.

"You are not going to-day," he said, sullenly, taking up his letters.

He tried to read them, but though he nailed his eyes to the written lines he saw none of them. He only saw his wife sitting by the fire, rigid in thought, her lips pressed together, a frown between her dark eyebrows. He began to grow uncomfortable. What if she were thinking him a tyrant, an unreasonable, fidgety old man—afraid of a draught and a drop of rain? He was always so anxious that she should find him none the worse husband for his twenty-seven years of seniority; that he should not act as a wet blanket, a drag upon her youth. Her obedience touched him. Helena would not have submitted so had he crossed her will—or Helena's mother either. Poor girl, she was very young, and it was dull to live in the country alone with an elderly man, unless that man were a marvel of amiability. She had no doubt looked forward to her day's shopping; she had made all her plans; she was very strong in her healthy youth, and did not catch cold easily. He was just considering how to give her her own way without demoralising inconsistency, when the footman came to announce the carriage.

"I don't want it; I am not going to-day," she said.

He could not make up his mind in time. The footman vanished.

"Poor Trix," he said, kindly, "you are disappointed. It really would have been folly to go on such a day, with a hole in your tooth. You certainly would have had agonies of toothache. Come, let us send the necessary telegrams. You shall go the first fine day."

"Telegrams won't do any good," she said, dolefully.

"Oh, yes, they will. Tell the dentist you will go next Saturday, if fine; tell the cooks and housemaids the same. I want to go next Saturday myself, so we can go together and make a day of it."

"Servants won't keep. I must write a letter about them," she said, and with her words a sudden light came to her perturbed face. "William can ride to Monkchester with them; he will just catch the 10.30 post."

"You can write them here," said Sir Everard, as she rose to leave the room.

"No; I have something to seek," she murmured, hurriedly, and left him.

She went to her own room, and sat down at her writing-table. She got out her paper and then paused.

"I don't feel sure about his name, and he gave no address at all," she said to herself. "It is very awkward. I must just trust to it reaching him somehow."

She wrote; but not to a cook or a dress-maker. She addressed an envelope to "Mr. Watson, care of the Editor of 'The Coalliquay Express.'" Then she wrote:

"Lady Treverton begs to inform Mr. Watson that having considered the subject on which he spoke to her yesterday, she must decline to allow her name to be used for such a purpose, and trusts that it is not too late to stop the publication of those details which she gave him under the influence of surprise, but which the opportunity of a little reflection would certainly have bidden her withhold. She is willing to pay double the price promised by the newspapers, that her name may be kept out of them. She intended to call to-day at the 'Express' office, supposing Mr. Watson to be on the staff of that paper, but was prevented by the weather."

She rang, and gave the letter to a servant, with the order that it should be sent at once to the Monkchester post office. Then she returned to her husband in the dining-room.

"You have got your business settled?" he asked, kindly. "Squared the artists in teeth, millinery, and gastronomy?"

"I quite forgot," she exclaimed, pulling the bell. "Tell William to wait; there are other letters to go," she ordered.

Then she hurried to the writing-table in the window. She filled up two telegraph forms, and then wrote a hurried letter to the manager of the register office.

"I am going to the stables; give them to me," said Sir Everard. "There is just time."

She gave them into his hand, and he walked off with them. He glanced at the address of the letter mechanically; then, as he crossed the hall, more attentively. The telegrams were in an open envelope, crammed in so hurriedly that one was sticking half out. He took them out to fold them more tidily, and saw they were addressed to the dentist and the dress-maker.

"Here are the letters," he said to the groom; "one letter and two telegrams, and see you lose no time."

"Two letters, sir," corrected William, taking the first letter from his pocket, and putting the others with it. "Her ladyship sent this first."

Sir Everard did not see the address, and could not bring himself to make an excuse to look at it. The groom mounted his horse and rode off.

"Whom has she written to besides?" he pondered. "The first was evidently the important letter."

But the important letter never reached Mr. Watson. It was to return to Lady Treverton through the dead-letter office ten days later. He had posted his copy the night before to the London and Wellingby papers, being an industrious young man—though he had no connection whatever with "The Coalliquay Express"—and anxious to turn an honest penny in any direction. He also posted a letter to Mr. Cullingworth.

"DEAR BOB,—I have interviewed her ladyship since sounding the neighbourhood, as I reported in my last. There is certainly something to be made out of her antecedents if the other line should fail. She got very red at my hinting at a previous marriage, and at the mention of her having called herself Mrs. Lyon. But I think you will get your case out of Sir Everard, and her ladyship's mysteries need not be gone into yet. I have seen an old aunt of Emily Stort, who was very fond of the girl, and who declares her conviction that Sir Everard married her, and that it is quite possible that she may not be dead. She showed me a fanciful sort of silk Indian shawl which had come to her mysteriously, without any clue to the sender, except the postmark on the paper it was wrapped in. The postmark is Indian, the date July, 1865—the very year Sir Everard left England after his

first wife's death. Miss Wilkins, the aunt, declares that no one but Emily would have sent it; and also, that Emily would not have died without sending her some intimation; whether before or after the fact, Miss Wilkins does not say. Out of her rambling story I gathered that she had aided and abetted Captain Treverton in his love affair, and, consequently, had quarrelled with the girl's parents on the subject, who had never believed in the Captain's honourable intentions, and had, therefore, blamed the ambitious aunt for all that happened.

"Where the hitch comes in is, why was the aunt silent? If she really believed her niece to be married to Sir Everard Treverton, why did she keep it a secret? This mystery still remains to be solved. If it fails, I shall set to work upon the Beatrix scent. Yours ever,

"NED."

Not quite the letter of a clerk to his employer, much less that of a detective to the solicitor who was making use of him. In fact, Mr. Edward Watson was Mr. Cullingworth's younger brother, who had taken up the private enquiry line of business, but who, for the sake of his brother's reputation, worked under a different name.

A week went by—a very dreary week of rain, alternating with damp dulness outside; of doubting division, alternating with strangely sorrowful tenderness within.

Beatrix sat alone in her beautiful drawing-room, feeling it as dreary as a cavern in the desert, musing on the mistake of her life—her marriage. What a beautiful, happy life she had pictured, living there with her handsome, cultivated, adoring husband, whose years only gave him superiority! What a wonderful thing it had seemed to her, one day when Sir Everard had taken her and Mrs. Dudley over the house, that this very drawing-room should be hers; that it should be her home, not a mere show to her; that the stately portraits on the walls—Holbeins, Vandycks, Lelys, Gainboroughs—should become not mere historical characters, but near relations, her children's forefathers; that her tea should be set on one or other of the dainty Chippendale tables—tables round which great ladies in saques and powder had gossiped, on which they had gambled half the Treverton lands away; that she should poke the fires that would

burn in the middle of those surroundings.

It was far beyond her wildest flights of imagination that familiarity with these wonderful things should bring indifference which was almost contempt; that though she bore the name and title of those lovely painted ladies in satin and powder, she should feel as if she had no more lot and part with them and theirs than any tourist from Monkehester or Coaliquay, who came to see over the Chase on show days.

Had the disparity of rank and education between Beatrix Lyon and the stately Trevertons been so great as to be beyond bridging even by marriage with the head of the family? Was Sir Everard aware of it, now the first heat of his love was past, and the hurry of their marriage was over, and there was time and light to see fairly? Was he repenting the exchange he had made of his devoted daughter for a stranger? Was he blaming his new wife for the estrangement? Surely there must have been some fault on her side, or Helena would not have resented the marriage so bitterly.

Was she to pay the penalty of having mated her sparrow-like insignificance with eagles, by being pecked to death by petty tyrannies and unreasonable interferences? Why had Sir Everard been so obstinate in forbidding that expedition to Coaliquay? Did he mean to stop every plan, however harmless, that he himself had not originated? He had disappointed her of Venice, all for no reason; he had been unkind and unsympathetic when she had wished to help the poor Princess at Bigorre and again at Coaliquay. There was no doubt about it—their marriage had been too hurried. She had had no idea of these despotic tendencies. They ought to have known more of each other.

And Sir Everard in the library! What of the home that had been the home of his fathers and of his whole life? Desolation had come upon it. Helena, his darling, had become his open enemy. Beatrix, for whom he had lost her, was divided from him; a gulf to be felt rather than seen lay between them. Harassed to death by Mr. Key's letters telling him of Helena's extraordinary investigations, that must lead only to shame and sorrow, and yet to an end of which she could not dream; indignant beyond expression at hearing from the Monkehester lawyers of the gossip afloat about his wife; feeling bound,

for her sake, and the sake of his own dignity, to take no notice of such buzzing of rustic gnats, even by showing consciousness of it in his manner of treating his neighbour. He told himself that if only he and Beatrix had been able to share each other's full confidence, he would have cared nothing for all these annoyances, but that without her help he must soon go crazy.

There was no doubt about it. There could not be full sympathy where there was such a disparity of age between them. Their marriage had been a mistake; it was too hurried; they had known nothing of each other. She evidently looked upon him as a jealous old tyrant, from whom she must keep her little secrets. He was too old to understand them and to sympathise.

But when they met in the first hour before dressing, that Beatrix loved to prolong, and he let her give him tea in the dainty old cups his mother had loved, and he looked into her kind, honest face, the deep, true eyes so tender and anxious in the firelight, all his love rushed over these barriers of perplexity and remorse, and he knew that she was worth losing all the world for, and that no cost was too great to pay for her, and that if only this worry of Helena's were over, which so unhinged his mind, there would be perfect joy, perfect trust, perfect sympathy, perfect union at last and for ever between them, and his heart would become young like hers.

Such an hour of peace and happiness they had on the Friday evening of that tiresome wet week. He had come to take his tea as usual from his wife sitting in the firelight. She had been half asleep when he came in, and he had the rare joy of meeting the loving delight in her waking eyes at seeing him, before she had brought her drowsy mind to remember the cruel little misunderstandings of the past days.

He fixed that loving look upon her eyes, before it had had time to change or vanish, by meeting it with the gladness of his own. He stooped over her, and kissed her tenderly twice.

"All this evening to ourselves, dear," he said, exultation mingled with the deep content of his tone, as if an evening with his wife were quite a stolen pleasure.

"It is delightful," she answered, pouring out his tea, while he took his place beside her on one of the little red chairs that had

audaciously introduced themselves amongst the Chippendales and Sheratons.

"Not so delightful for you, poor child," he said, with an anxious glance at her bright face, "to be shut up with an old man; and I fear it will be the forerunner of many dull evenings now the bridal dinner-parties are coming to an end."

"You are fishing for compliments, and I won't encourage it," she laughed. "You see, the wild excitement of Moorlandshire dinner-parties, and the high pitch of culture attained in the conversation there, brings a strain too great to be borne for long by commonplace minds. There was an invitation to lunch at the Singletons' to-morrow; it was such a relief to have to tell them we were engaged."

"And are we? I had forgotten. I was congratulating myself on a prospect of peace at any rate until over Sunday."

"We are going to Coalquay to-morrow!" she reminded him, in reproachful surprise.

"But that could have easily been put off!"

"Why, surely you do not want to go to the Singletons'!" she exclaimed, astonished.

"I don't want you to offend people," he answered, uneasily. "They have been a long time in asking us."

"All the more reason why we should not cheapen ourselves by going too readily. Such a shabby invitation, too; lunch—and only a day's notice! Besides, you said you were obliged to go to Coalquay to-morrow."

"Not obliged; a letter or a later day might have done. It does not matter, though; they have been rude in asking us so tardily; and lunch is a very informal matter."

It was a very happy evening. For the first time they were both really at home. The weather, too, had changed at last; a glorious flood of moonlight made the outdoor night almost day. They sat by the window to admire it—Beatrix in a black oak chair, her head against a cushion of golden Indian work, looking quite beautiful as the lustrous whiteness bathed her earnest face, her statuesque neck and arms, and lit mystic lights in the depths of her fathomless eyes; Sir Everard, watching not so much the marvellous moon-washed distances of fall and forest as the moonlit eyes and lips of his wife. How grand, how noble she looked in her plain, black velvet gown, the low, square-cut edges

lying unrelieved against the dazzling pearliness of her neck! A woman to trust with his love, with his life, with his honour; a woman worthy to sit in the place of the stately ladies whose portraits hung round.

After her wondering admiration of the moonlight, and his pointing-out of distant landmarks, distinctly visible, a long silence fell upon them—as upon Paolo and Francesco, when they “read no more that day.” But that silence was very full of voices—whispers of the last leaves of autumn, as the soft wind shook them down, whispers of soul to soul.

“How silly I am to think he is tired of me, and full of petty despotism!” was the whisper Beatrix heard. “I have had too much of my own way all my life; that is why it seems to me such an unheard-of thing to find another will in the way of mine. I must remember that my promise of obedience was not an empty form, and that he may sometimes know better than I do what is right. Then all our lives will be as happy as this evening.”

“Why do I chafe and depress her so by objecting to everything she wants to do, if I do not see reason of it, or, seeing, am not satisfied? Can I not trust her? But it is Helena’s fault. I am not myself. My mind is worn and worried by her vagaries. If only this trouble were past, all our lives will be as happy as this evening. But alas! she is laying up unthought-of sorrow for herself, poor girl; and how can I stop it? It is enough to send a man mad to think of it.”

Beatrix became conscious that the calm, deep content had given place to restless anxiety; the touch of his hand told her. She turned her face and saw the worried look had returned.

“Let us come to the fire again,” she said.

“Sing to me, Beatrix.”

She went to the piano, and looked over some music.

“I want some new songs,” she said. “You must be tired of these old things.”

“I never tire of old English ballads and Scotch songs. Sing what you sang at the Blakes’ last night, that lovely song of Hook’s—‘Listen, listen to the voice of love,’ was it not?”

“Oh! Everard, I was so ashamed of it! Did you not think it was a fiasco? I am so out of practice.”

“You must have some lessons.”

“Lessons! It seems such ages since I had singing lessons; not since——”

She paused abruptly, and dropped the music-book on the keys. It fell with a hideous discord. Perhaps it was that discord that went on vibrating, for the harmony of the evening was over. Beatrix selected the next song she came upon, and sang it without another word. Perhaps it was for want of lessons and practice, perhaps it was not a pretty song, perhaps she was thinking of something else, something unpleasant while she sang it; but Sir Everard did not enjoy it.

“I cannot sing,” she said, impatiently, when she had come to the end. “I think I have caught cold. I will try to find some nice new songs at Coaliquay to-morrow.”

“You cannot go if you have caught cold.”

“Why are you so averse to my going to Coaliquay?” she asked, petulantly. “Everything seems capable of being made into a reason for stopping it. One would say you had heard the train was to be wrecked by dynamite, or that you had had some ghostly prophetic warning against it; and it is only for a little commonplace, uneventful shopping.”

“One would think you were engaged in some secret conspiracy there; you are so extraordinarily bent on going, at any cost,” he said, crossly.

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CHAPTER III. THE CIRCLE OF FIDELITY.

"ANYTHING does for Corriemoor!"

Had it come to that already? I began to think so. No one seemed to take any interest in what one wore, or how one looked. Sometimes I put on one of my pretty trousseau gowns, but I might as well have worn sackcloth for any notice that it aroused. The Laird had but two ideas of colour—black and white. When one was young, one ought to wear the latter; when middle-aged and old, the former. Mrs. Campbell was of opinion that married women should never wear bright colours, and therefore I concluded her silence on the subject of my gowns argued disapproval.

I seldom troubled now about them. Dark serge or homespun suited best the mountain climate and the rough moorland roads. When the weather allowed of it I rode for hours together—as often as not by myself, though that proceeding was the subject of grave disapprobation also. It was the only pleasure I had, and the Laird had given me a beautiful little thoroughbred mare, with whom I was perfectly at home, and who would carry me like a bird over the rough, wild country, making light of gates and fences that came in our way.

I had determined that Bella should come back with me when I left Inverness. I felt that for once in my life I must assert myself—that I could not go back and

plunge into the dreariness and dulness of Corriemoor without some temporary relief.

My stay with Grannie was nearly over. The afternoon after I had met Douglas Hay I was sitting by her side in the little drawing-room, idling with some fanciful embroidery that never seemed to make much progress in my hands. I had mentioned my meeting with Douglas, and his intention to call. I wondered whether he would do so, and if he would bring that strange-looking friend of his with him.

Grannie reclined in her easy-chair; a bright fire burned in the grate, for the spring days were still cold for an invalid. Her worn, patient face looked very sweet with its close, lace cap, and bands of silver hair. Her folded hands lay on her lap, looking very white and thin in contrast with her plain, black gown.

I watched her for some time in silence. I was wondering how long it would be before I, too, could win the patience and resignation that made life so calm and restful for her.

"Grannie," I said, at last, seating myself on the stool at her feet, and leaning my head against her knee, "have you had very much trouble in your life?"

"Why do you ask that, my bairn?" she said, meeting my upturned eyes with kindly wonder.

"I don't know why, exactly, only your face looks as if it had known a great deal of care and sorrow; and yet you are so patient—I've never heard you complain."

"The Lord has been very good to me," she said, gently. "I'll not deny that sometimes the stripes of affliction were heavy and hard to bear; but strength is aye given to those who seek it aright, and I learnt to be patient and content at last.

The worst trial was my gude-man's death ; I always call him that, my bairn—no name ever suited him so well. He was a gude-man to me ; and I often think that I must have been a sore trial and burden to him, for I was a young, feckless thing when I married, and scarcely knew the worth or meaning of a true and patient love. Then we had many trials—loss of children, health, money ; but never from his lips came a word of complaint or a murmur of discontent. After he died, I only knew the true meaning of the word 'loneness.' Oh, that was a bitter and weariful time ! to wake in the grey dawns and know no cheering voice could greet me, no kind hand give its strong and safe support again ! Ah, Athole, my bairn, Heaven spare you ever such a trial ! When two have been one, and between them comes the darkness and silence which no power on earth may rend asunder, that is the thing that breaks one down, and teaches how helpless and how weak we are."

I was silent ; I thought that I, too, had known something of that pain, and darkness, and silence ; its cloud had never really lifted from off my life. Passive endurance had followed passionate pain ; coldness had grown up where once fervid, palpitating, tremulous love had filled heart and soul to overflowing.

This dreaded thing that she called "loneness"—did I not know it, too ? Surely my pain might equal hers, seeing that at least her love had died no death of unworthiness—that always it would be with her in the tender grace and ceaseless reverence of the memory that shined it as its holiest treasure.

"Tell me more," I said, huskily, as I bent my head on her lap. "I want to know how to bear life when it gets hard and—and difficult ; when everything seems at war within our souls."

"But my little lassie has no need to ask that—yet," she said, tenderly, as she laid her frail hand on my bowed head. "Trial and trouble have not touched you very heavily, Athole—only the fretfulness and impatience of youth against its own mistakes, or rebellion against a life that is not just what one would have it. Youth is ever so, my bairn ; but every year will teach you patience and forbearance, and bring new duties in its train."

I shivered as I rested there in the warm firelight.

It is no say for the old to preach ; so

hard for the young to believe. The years might come and go as they pleased ; they could never again bring the gladness to my heart that is like sunshine to the day. But if there would only come to me peace, rest, quiet ; if I could cease to rebel, cease to desire, cease to think !

It was thought that distracted and troubled me ; the perpetual conflict, the unending questioning, the consciousness of desires unattainable and persistent, the ceaseless "why, why, why" that made of life, love, duty, religion, a torture of doubts that nothing set at rest.

Blessed are those who can accept without question—to whom Faith is as easy as Life, when the one serves the purpose of the other, and is accepted as its best gift.

I was not like these contented and un-seeking natures ; I knew it—I had always known it—and for me life could not but hold tragedy, and sorrow, and remorse. Even as I leant there against Grannie's knees in the old, childish way, even as I listened to the sweet patience of her voice, and the kind gentleness of her words, I knew in my heart that she would be terrified and horror-struck could she read my mind, could she know the wild turbulence of feeling, the scarce restrained impatience, the ceaseless, racking torture of doubt and desire that there held unholy revel.

Yet I was not willingly thus. I would have been glad enough to believe as she believed, to accept as she accepted, to emulate the patience and steadfastness of her nature. Only by what force—moral or mental—was I to accomplish such a task ? To me it only seemed that life held

Neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help from pain.

I did not desire its continuance, but I did wish to know more of its meaning—to know why it was forced unasked and undesired upon humanity ; why we were all flung and tossed about on its shifting currents like a pack of badly shuffled cards ; why, ever and always throughout the length and breadth of the globe we called Earth, there rang one ceaseless cry of pain, which never seemed to win response or pity, which, with its vain appeal, mocked every faith and form to which men clung with bleeding hands, which at last Death loosed and folded over silent breast and pulseless heart, between the dark and dawn of an ended day.

But had I spoken thus, where could I have met with comprehension in the narrow circle to which I was restricted? Pity and wonder I might find in abundance; tears and prayers for a better frame of mind, or that I might be brought to see things in the "true light"—the light which to me seemed no more true than the hopes based upon it. I could only endure passively to the end. I would not vex this kind and simple soul by the confession of doubts and misgivings such as these.

The sands were running low in Time's hour-glass. Not by word or deed of mine should their passage be troubled or perplexed; I loved her too dearly for that. If she believed that I was happy, that the comforts and luxuries of my new home were all I desired in the new life I had accepted, I would not disturb that belief.

A loud knock at the front door startled me from the dreamy sadness of that long silence.

Grannie had fallen asleep. The afternoon was waning, the room was half in shadow, save where the flames sent flickering gleams and flashes from time to time.

I rose to my feet as the door opened. It was not hard to guess the visitor—not so hard as to meet the quick flash of those dark blue eyes with the cold greeting of conventionality.

"Grannie is asleep," I said; "but I dare say she will soon wake. Will you sit near the fire? Why have you not brought Mr. Penryth?"

"I was afraid Mrs. Lindsay might not care to see strangers in her state of health," he said.

The cold, measured tones of the familiar voice fell strangely on my ear.

To think that we should be here again, in this same room, at this same hour of dusk and firelight, and yet what worlds apart we seemed! He seated himself by the window, and I went back to my old chair.

"She is still very weak," I said, nodding in the direction of the quiet figure. "This illness has tried her very severely."

"I am sorry to hear it. She was very kind to me," he added, irrelevantly. "But I always think I was not a favourite of hers. I wonder if she could believe in my reformation!"

"Have you reformed?" I asked, quickly. "In what way?"

"In all ways, if reformation means to do nothing one used to do, and care for

nothing for which one used to care, to have grown old in feelings, and cold in affections. I feel like a stranger here. I felt like a stranger in my father's house, and yet it is but two years since I left the place."

"Two years can be very long under some circumstances," I said.

"You have not found them so, I suppose?" he answered, looking at me with sudden and embarrassing scrutiny. "Your life has been fortunate and happy. I wonder whether mine will ever be more than an aimless dream."

"It ought to be," I said, my voice hard and cold with stern restraint; "you have been successful—what does a man need more? With wealth, and youth, and strength of will, you can scarcely call life aimless."

"Are you happy, Athole?" he asked with startling abruptness, and leaning suddenly forward.

The light of the leaping flames shone upon my face, and found me unprepared for their too candid revelation.

"I—why do you ask?" I said, drawing back into the gloom once more. "Is there any reason why I should not be so?"

"Only one," he said, sternly, "if there were any truth or constancy in woman."

"Perhaps," I said, "you will mention that reason. I will tell you if it applies to my case."

"It is not one that need trouble you," he said, with a fierce bitterness in the low tones of his changed voice. "It is only that you have spoilt all my life for me; only that you have taught me the true meaning of the word despair; only that your harsh judgement, however deserved, has poisoned every hour of my life since last I saw you. But that cannot matter now—I am a fool to confess it. But, oh, Athole—Athole, if you were free, and these two years could roll back! I know now what love means to a nature like yours, and I could love you worthily at last. But it is all too late—too late! Why were you so hard on me? Why did you send me from you? My error was only the error of youth—a folly of the senses—never of the heart. Can women never believe the wide difference that lies between those two cases?"

"Hush," I said, entreatingly. "You have no right to say such words. The past is all over and done with. We made a great mistake, you and I. Perhaps I

was too exacting, and you too light. I do not know; sometimes I have thought so; but there is no use to speak of it now."

"I suppose not," he said; "and yet it was strange, was it not, Athole, that when I have been face to face with death I always saw you, felt you, recognised you as the one want of my life. I grew certain enough of my feelings when it was too late for the certainty to be of any use."

"What use to tell me of such things?" I said, coldly. "We both made a mistake once; you in promising, I in believing too much. It can do no good to refer to it. All the sorrow and remorse in the world won't give back one of those days and hours."

"Would you have one back if you could?" he said, his voice low and eager, his eyes looking back to mine with the old remembered look.

A sense of passionate indignation rose in my heart. How dared he speak to me thus, look at me thus? In the days when I loved and believed in him he had almost broken my heart. That first love had been to me as a religion, so pure it was, so deep in faith. It had been turned to shame, doubt, despair. And to speak of it now—now!

I glanced at the hand lying idly on my lap. By some chance I had forgotten to put on any of the rings I usually wore. The firelight gleamed on one alone—the plain gold band that symbolised my marriage.

"You don't answer," he said, presently.

I looked at him coldly and defiantly, then lifted my hand.

"My answer is—there," I said, touching the ring.

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE OR MARTYRDOM?

THERE was a moment of silence after my last words. I rose, and went over to the fireplace and broke the coals gently into a fuller blaze. The noise woke Grannie as I had hoped it would. She sat up and asked me the time.

At sound of her voice Douglas rose, and came forward into the light of the fire.

"I have come to see you, Mrs. Lindsay," he said, holding out his hand. "I was so sorry to hear of your long illness from—Mrs. Campbell."

Instinctively I started. It was the first time he had called me that, and the name

had a strange, unfamiliar sound spoken by his lips. Grannie seemed delighted to see him, and poured forth endless questions as to his doings and adventures during the last two years. I sat there listening, silently.

Presently Bella bustled in, all gaiety and chatter, and the lamp was lighted, and tea brought, and conversation became general.

It seemed to me that Douglas was very much improved. He was less gay and frivolous, he talked well—almost brilliantly—and listened to Grannie with a deference and sympathy such as he had never been wont to display.

I could not help thinking how much older he looked; but the change was an improvement, seeing that the face had gained in character what it had lost in youth.

"I am going back to Australia," he said, in answer to some question of Grannie's; "I like it, and I like the free and unconventional life."

"You'll be taking to yourself a Colonial wife," said Bella, laughing; "I hear the Australian girls are very beautiful and very charming."

"That may be," he said, curtly; "I don't know any. The only people with whom I was on anything like terms of intimacy were some Scotch folk, with whom Huel and I stayed, and who came home with us. But the daughters, though very pretty, clever girls, were scarcely types of the genuine Australian. They were always very anxious to see their father's native land, and so he brought them over. We parted in Liverpool, but I should never be surprised to see them up North any day. They meant to make a tour of Scotland."

I found myself wondering and speculating about these girls. Were they pretty? Did he like them? Perhaps some day he would marry one of them, and live in that New World which he seemed to appreciate so much. Well, it could not matter to me now what he did or where he went.

Yet a sense of irritation was strong within me as I sat silently there listening to him. Why had he not always been as he was now? If, as he had said, he was capable of loving more worthily, he was also more worthy of being loved. The folly, lightness, and frivolity of youth had changed into the deeper gravity and earnestness of manhood. No years of education could have given him what those two years of hardship, endurance,

work, and privation had given. Had we met now, or had I been less hasty in fettering myself with those chains of duty I felt so heavy and so burdensome, life might have been a very different thing to both of us.

At last he took his leave. Both eyes and hand-clasp were cold for me. I told myself that it was well they should be—well, that between us both some barrier of wrath and indifference should arise and live for ever.

I could not understand why this sudden meeting—this sudden recall of old memories and associations—had been able to affect me thus. I had thought myself so stony, so safe, so cold; and he had seemed to have passed so utterly out of my life—to have entered into such a totally different sphere of action! When I thought of his words, of the look in his eyes as the dancing fire flames had flashed into their depths, I felt a strange and most unholy gladness.

"He suffers now," I told myself. "He knows at last what it is to lose love and hope; to see life turn blank and grey as the years gather round it." All he had given me to bear was recolling on himself. It was just, and I was glad of it.

Yet presently, when darkness and solitude were with me, and I laid down my aching head and vainly sought to find rest or sleep, I wondered why Fate had played so cruel a trick on me. It would have been so much better not to have met him again—to have felt that silence and distance lay between our parted lives for evermore. How the old sense of loneliness and despair came over me that night! What a useless being I seemed! I had no aim or object in life. What could I do at Corriemoor which had not been done much better by others?

It was not possible to take much interest in snuffy old men and women who talked a scarcely intelligible language, and desired nothing better than their annual gifts of tobacco and whisky from the Laird. There was no absolute poverty or distress upon the whole estate—they were too hardy for sickness; too satisfied with their own spiritual and moral welfare for discontent. If I visited them they were friendly, and not one whit conscious of any favour. They accepted everything as a right, and would advise or suggest actions in a calm and perfectly affable manner which used to astonish me. When they prayed they asked a special blessing

on Corriemoor and all belonging to it, and confidently believed that the blessing would be given.

I was rather patronised and looked down upon. "The young wife up at Corriemoor," they called me, and the old women would lecture me on the imprudence of taking long rides in all weathers, or suggest a more intimate concern in dairy work or household matters, as befitting one connected with that illustrious place. I lay awake now and thought with shuddering dislike of going back to it all; the Laird's placid good-humour; Mrs. Campbell's perpetual lectures and suggestions; the dull, formal dinner-parties; the visits to be paid and received; the books that had to be read and re-read; the dreary Sundays, with the long service at the kirk, and the inevitable discussions and arguments on points of "doctrine" afterwards.

I knew it all so well. I had never so loathed and hated it as I did now. And there was no help, no hope of alteration, from month to month, from year to year. My life was mapped out for me; I could not get away from it—I could only endure.

Well, if numbness was not rest it was better than the rack of pain; I might grow passively content in time.

In time; and yet I had only one hope to breathe, one prayer to pray, "Heaven in mercy keep him from me!"

The next day the Laird came to Inverness. He did not stay at Craig Bank, for there was no accommodation for him in that small domicile, but he put up at the hotel—the same hotel where Douglas and his friend were staying. He came over to see us, brimful of his meeting with them both, and delighted with Huel Penryth, whom he declared to be a man of highly superior intelligence, as well as a fine sportsman.

"If only I could offer him some shooting," he said, regretfully.

"Would you have asked them to Corriemoor if it had been August, or Septamber?" I said, wonderingly.

"Certainly I would," he answered, with a heartiness that showed his hospitable intentions were genuine.

"It is only three months to August; but they are not going to stay here," I said.

"Perhaps they will come back," said the Laird, cheerfully. "Penryth talks of going to Cornwall—that is his native

place—and Hay will accompany him. It seems very odd," he went on, "that in Australia they should have knocked up against an old friend and schoolfellow of mine, Robert M'Kaye; he's a rich man now, and has a cattle station on the Emu River. We have corresponded occasionally. Now he's come over to the old country for a while, and brought his two daughters with him. I must get to see them all, and ask them to Corriemoor. Robert M'Kaye and I were main good friends in our college days; but he was poor, and not over-well placed at home, and had a very adventurous nature. I'm very glad he's been such a successful man. Penryth speaks warmly of him, and his kindness and hospitality; and he's very rich."

"That," I said, somewhat bitterly, "is to sum up all his virtues in a word. Is he coming to Inverness, did you hear?"

"They could not just be sure of that; but he'll be in Glasgow. If I only knew for certain where, I'd make a point of going down to see him. He's staying, so Penryth says."

"Surely Mr. Penryth could ascertain his address?" I said, rather annoyed at the unwonted excitement displayed about these people. "Why don't you ask him?"

He surveyed me somewhat doubtfully.

"I was thinking," he said, "would you be wearying if I left you here a wee bit longer? Then I could run down to Glasgow and ascertain if Mr. M'Kaye has arrived there yet. I know his folk; he's sure to be seeing them, and then, maybe, I could arrange for him to visit us at Corriemoor."

"I should be delighted," I said, eagerly. Anything in the shape of novelty was delightful to me. The introduction of new faces and friends at Corriemoor promised at least some change in the dull routine of its life.

"Then I'll do that," said the Laird, with almost startling abruptness. "I'll leave for Glasgow to-morrow, and it'll be strange if I don't light upon Robert M'Kaye before a day has passed."

"And I will remain here," I said, "until you return."

"Unless you would like to come there with me?" he said. "You've never seen Glasgow."

"No, and have no wish to," I answered, somewhat hurriedly. "I mean," I added, in apology for my candour, "that I've

always heard it was so dirty, and gloomy, and ugly."

"It's not a very beautiful place," he said; "even the Scotch folk cannot but allow that. You see the coal and iron factories spoil it, and the climate is aye dull and damp. But there's money to be made there, and the wealthy folk can afford to live out of the town and its grime and ugliness. Kelvingrove is very pretty, and one or two of the parks. You're sure you would not care to go with me?"

I shook my head.

"Grannie is not at all strong yet," I said, "and she is very reluctant to lose me. I will stay with her until you return, and," I added, with a courage born of determination, "I have asked Bella Cameron to come back with me to Corriemoor for a while. It is so long since she stayed there"

His face clouded.

"My mother does not like her," he said.

"I am sorry for that," I answered, coldly, "but you can't expect me to order all my affections and tastes to please your mother. As it is, I am a mere cipher in the house, and am never consulted or considered in any way."

His ruddy face paled. He looked at me with a dawning fear in his calm, grey eyes.

"Why, Athole—why, my dear," he said, wonderingly, "you're no meaning to say that you're not satisfied? I thought you and my mother agreed so well."

"So we do," I answered, rather ashamed of my momentary irritation. "You can't disagree with a person to whom you are bound to submit your judgement and inclination even in the smallest matter, and that is what I have to do at Corriemoor."

"I thought you were quite content," he muttered, looking at me as if I had presented myself before him under a totally new aspect.

I laughed somewhat bitterly.

"Oh, I do not wish to change things—they are best as they are; but I think I am at liberty to ask my cousin, or—or any one else to stay with me, if I wish, without your mother's permission."

"Of course, of course," he said, hurriedly. "I'll make that all right with her—and, indeed," he added, as if struck by a brilliant idea, "there's no reason why we shouldn't have some folk to stay at Corriemoor and rouse you up a bit. I'll have the M'Kayes, and perhaps Mr. Penryth,

and young Hay might come to us also. There's room and to spare in the old place, and we'll go up the lochs. You've never been there yet. I can have Lord Montteith's yacht for the asking; he's not using it—he's abroad in Spain this year. I'm pleased I thought of it. No doubt you've been dull and moping at Corriemoor; but we'll cheer you up a bit, and have some young life there. Ay! that we will."

He rubbed his hands together, and his whole face beamed with satisfaction. I was rather taken aback by this new scheme of his. The idea of his inviting Douglas Hay and Hual Penryth to stay at Corriemoor seemed preposterous.

"But they will never accept," I told myself. "Surely Douglas would not dream of staying there—under my roof—as my guest."

I felt so sure of this that I did not trouble myself to combat the Laird's scheme. It would fall to the ground of itself.

The next day he left for Glasgow, and I remained at Craig Bank.

ENGLISH DINNERS IN MEDIÆVAL TIMES.

HEAVY feeders were our forefathers in the days when Alfred was King. At dinner they regaled themselves voraciously on meats, both baked and boiled, which were handed round on spits, each guest taking as much as seemed good to him. They drank freely of mead and ale—brewed without hops—or, if they were well-to-do, of wine—of motat, a drink of mulberry juice and honey—and pigment, a concoction of wine, honey, and spices. While the cups were passing round, harpers and minstrels played and sang; and jugglers and jesters did their fooling when the guests wearied of the more intellectual pastime. It was thus that Alfred entertained Guthrun, the Danish chief, and his thirty jarls after their surrender at Brutton Edge.

Four meals a day—and each so abundant that it might fitly have passed for a dinner—satisfied, more or less fully, the majestic appetites of those early ancestors of ours. Upon this excess of eating, the Danish invaders grafted, as it were, excess of drinking. As everybody knows, King Hardacnut drank himself into an apoplectic fit at the dinner given by Osgood Clapa, at Lambeth, on the occasion of his daughter's wedding.

But neither intemperance in eating nor in drinking was a vice of the Norman. He was less of a glutton and more of an epicure: he liked dainty dishes and savoury, and preferred the light wines of France to the heavy ale-mead or hippocras of England. Edward the Confessor, brought up under Norman influences, introduced into his court Norman usages; and abstemiousness and sobriety prevailed in the place of gluttony and drunkenness. Elsewhere, the English thern ate and drank as immoderately as ever.

William the First had a fine sense of what was becoming at a Royal table. He was so well pleased, at one of his little dinners, with a savoury soup compounded by his cook, Tezelin, that he sent for him and asked how it was named.

"I call it dillagrouit," was the reply.

"A poor name for so good a soup!" cried the King. "Nathless"—everybody said "nathless" in those days—"we bestow upon you the Manor of Addington."

This manor, I may add, reverted to the Crown. In the reign of Henry the Third we find it in the hands of the Bardolfs, and held on the tenure of "making pasties in the King's kitchen on the day of his coronation, or providing some one as his deputy, to make a dish called grout; and if suet (seym) was added, it was called malpignoun." At James the Second's coronation, the lord of the manor claimed to find a man to make a dish of grout in the Royal kitchen, and prayed that the King's cook might be the man. The claim was allowed, and the claimant knighted. But what was this grout? Was it identical with Tezelin's dillagrouit, and the Bardolfs' malpignoun? And was a pottage called Bardolf, of which a fourteenth century recipe has been printed by the Society of Antiquaries, identical with these? If so, as among the ingredients were almond milk, the brawn of capons, sugar and spice, chicken parboiled and chopped, etc., it was doubtlessly a dish for a King.

A story is told of the Conqueror to the effect that when, on one occasion, his favourite noble, William Fitz-Osborne, Earl of Hereford, who, as Steward of the Household, had charge of the cury—or cuisine—served him with the flesh of a crane scarcely half-roasted, he was so indignant that he lifted up his fist, and would have smote him, had not Eudo—appointed dapifer, or steward, immediately afterwards—warded off the blow.

William Rufus did not inherit his father's temperance. He was never so pleased as when he had gathered his boon companions in his Royal hall, to crack coarse jokes over high-spiced meats and kindling wines. He was hunting and feasting at Malwood Keep, in the green recesses of the New Forest, when, one night, after a bout of drinking, he dreamed bad dreams, which vexed him greatly. So a presentiment of evil came upon him, and he told his attendants he would not hunt that day. Dinner, however, was served—his last dinner!—and over his venison pasty and his wine his spirits revived. He ordered his horse to be saddled; mounted, and rode into the greenwood chase, attended by Walter Tyrrel. Drawing his bow, he wounded a stag; and almost at the same moment his breast was pierced by an arrow which Tyrrel had shot at another stag, but which, striking a tree, rebounded, and mortally hit the King. Rufus, in his agony, plucked at the arrow, which snapped off at the shaft, fell from his horse, and "word spake never more."

King Stephen was a good eater and a jolly companion. William of Malmesbury tells us that from his readiness to joke, and sit and regale—that is, dine—with "low people," he had gained so much on their affections as is hardly to be conceived. The "low people" were the citizens of London and the great towns, who abided faithfully by his cause throughout all his troubles.

Henry the Second had no objection to delicate meats and choice liquors. He knew how to maintain a becoming hospitality; but he loved statecraft and the exercise of power much more, and his strong intellect despised the coarser indulgences of the table. A man of restless activity—always on the move—he had little time for feasting, and did not encourage it in others. When the monks of Winchester complained that their Abbot had struck three dishes off their daily *carte du diner*,

"How many has he left you?" was his enquiry.

"Only ten! only ten!" whined the complainants.

"Ten!" exclaimed the King; "and I am content with three! Tell your Bishop that it is not fitting a monk should have more dishes than a King!"

He and Thomas Becket, before his minister and servant became Archbishop

of Canterbury, had some pleasant dinners together. They were on such intimate terms that Henry would ride straight into the hall where Becket sat at meat, and drink a cup of wine and begone, or would sit down and dine with him, taking "pot-luck," as one might say. Becket, in his secular days, was a good judge of good living, and a very liberal host. His admiring biographer, Fitz-Stephen, says: "He seldom went to dinner without the company of earls and barons, whom he had invited." It was considered to be a proof of his extravagance that he ordered the room in which he received his guests to be strewn every winter day with hay and clean straw, and in summer with fresh green boughs and rushes; so that the numerous knights for whom no seats could be found at the tables, might find the floor clean for their accommodation, and not soil their dainty attire. His board glittered with vessels of gold and silver, and was supplied with rich dishes and rare "drinks"; not that he himself ate or drank to excess, but because he had a natural taste for the sumptuous, and an inborn bountifulness of disposition. When he went on his famous embassy to France, twelve sumpter-horses were required to carry his gold and silver plate, his pitchers, his basins, his salt-cellars, his spoons, his knives, and so on. Two great waggons were stored with iron-bound casks of English beer; others with different kinds of meat and drink; others again with linen for the person and the table. At Paris the magnificence of his table furnished the gossips with a never-failing subject of conversation; and there is a tradition that he once gave a hundred shillings sterling—equal to fifty or sixty pounds at the present value of money—for a dish of eels. Even after he had become Archbishop, and posed as saint and ascetic, though at times he mortified his flesh upon bread and water, his table was generally spread with fastidious delicacy. He partook of few dishes, and but little of any; but he insisted that those should be choice and well cooked. His usual drink, according to Fitz-Stephen, was water in which fennel had been boiled; but other biographers affirm that he took a little wine for the same reason which induced Saint Paul to recommend it to Timothy.

That crowned knight-errant, whom popular tradition has surrounded with so much fictitious romance—Richard, surnamed the Lion-Heart—loved good dinners.

At his coronation there was a right Royal revel, and a sight worth seeing it must have been—the banqueting hall crowded with prelates, and nobles, and knights; the tables thronged with every luxury the culinary art of the age could accomplish; citizens of London serving in the Royal cellar, and those of Winchester in the Royal kitchen. When he went to the Crusades, Richard gave the most gorgeous dinners imaginable to King Philip of France at Messina, and to his future bride, Berengaria, and her mother, at Limasol, in Cyprus, and to Templars and Hospitallers at Jaffa. The minstrels and jongleurs of the time would have us believe that he had strange fancies about food. On one occasion, they say, when he entertained the Ambassadors of Saladin, he ordered a boar's head to be served up; and on another, when a craving for pork could not be satisfied, he dined upon the flesh of a young, plump Saracen. More wholesome, I should think, was the venison pasty which, according to Sir Walter Scott, he discussed with so much gusto in the cell of the clerk of Copmanhurst!

The good knights are dust, and their swords are rust; but they have left behind them some interesting records of their prowess at the feast, as well as in the field or the tourney. Among the many excellent consequences of the development of chivalry may be included this: that it introduced into the mediæval methods of dining a certain air of courtly and gracious hospitality, and a dignified ceremonial which had hitherto been absolutely unknown. Indeed, there is something quite impressive about the order which appertained to a great mediæval banquet.

As soon as the lord entered his dining-hall, a horn sounded, and the guests whom their rank entitled to sit at his table hastened to take their places. As soon as all were seated, the servitors brought to each a basin filled with perfumed water, in which to dip his hands, and a napkin of fine linen with which to dry them. Then the master-cook's assistants entered, bearing in their arms huge dishes of smoking viands, and set to work at the side-table to cut up joints of roast beef, pork, wild boar, the inevitable venison pasties, pheasants, capons, and birds of the farm-yard generally; while others placed before the guests thick slices of bread to serve as plates. The meal at an end, the servitors handed round cups of hippocras—a compound of Lisbon and Canary wines, well

spiced—the tables were removed; the floor was swept; and minstrels and story-tellers presented themselves, to while away the long winter hours. In the bright summer days, feats of arms and knightly exercises were performed.

“He was fonde of life,” says Peter Langtoft, speaking of King John, “and used licheric.” His extravagance and his sensuality were equally unbounded; and throughout all the storms and shadows of his reign he kept up a sumptuous table. One of his most memorable dinners was that which he gave at Winchester after his reconciliation with Archbishop Langton. Another was his banquet to the Barons when he had attached his seal and signature to the Great Charter of English Freedom. When, in the sore and yellow leaf of his unlovely life, he dined with the monks of Swineshead, one of them, according to a dubious story, put poison in his cup. He drank, and six days afterwards died:

Poisoned—ill fare; dead, forsook, cast off.

But it is much more probable that the cause of his death was a surfeit of peaches and new cider.

Perhaps the best dinner which Henry the Third ever enjoyed was on the occasion of his marriage to Eleanor of Provence. The nuptial feast was certainly one of extraordinary splendour, as you may read in the accurate pages of Miss Agnes Strickland, if you do not care for the old chroniclers. Henry, throughout his troubled reign, was much vexed by want of pence, which limited his expenditure on his cuisine. One year he was compelled to go to and fro seeking hospitality of “abbots, friars, clerks, and men of low degree, staying with them, and asking for gifts.” At another time he was so hard up that “he seized by force on whatever was used in the way of meat and drink—especially wine—and even clothes, against the will of those who sold these things.” A King reduced to such extremities could not pretend to any great nicety of taste relative to the quality of his provisions. His annual revenue seems never to have exceeded fifty thousand pounds—of our present money; a revenue on which he could not afford to be extravagant, especially as the price of wheat—and, consequently, of other articles—was subject, in his reign, to the most terrible fluctuations—varying from one shilling to a pound per quarter.

At this time the best dinners were to be found in the palaces of the bishops, and the refectories of mitred abbots. For example, there was Richard de Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford, whose Roll of Household Expenses, published by the Camden Society, shows the sumptuous manner of living of this prelate. His cellars were stored with the best wines; his kitchens were fragrant with appetising odours; the choicest products of the East filled his spiceries. His bakeries turned out for his use the best wheaten bread; his breweries, the strongest and most transparent ale. When he removed from one manor-house to another, or journeyed to London, he was accompanied by his domestic utensils, his brass pots, and his earthenware jugs; and his baker always preceded him, that the supply of bread might never run short. One day for dinner the bill of fare included three quarters of beef, three sheep, half a pig, eight geese, ten fowls, twelve pigeons, nine partridges, and uncounted larks, with a proportional supply of wine and beer. On fasting-days, the place of the meat, poultry, and game was taken by fish—eels, salmon, tench, lampreys, minnows, salt herrings and salt cod. In winter, oysters were bought by the gallon; in May and June, fresh mackerel tickled the episcopal palate; and trout, in their due season, grilled for his benefit. Spending one Christmas-tide at his Prestbury manor-house, he orders a cask of Bordeaux wine to be brought from Bristol, and an enormous quantity of beer to be brewed, and the Christmas Day dinner, for himself and his guests, comprehends two carcasses and three quarters of beef, with calves, does, pigs, fowls, bread and cheese, two "sectanis" of red wine and one of white. The total cost was four pounds, sixteen shillings and threepence farthing, or about forty pounds.

Edward the First, the greatest of the Plantagenets, was too much occupied with the working-out of a great policy, too much of a statesman and a general, to waste his time upon sensual indulgences; and during his reign the Royal dinner-table was somewhat meagrely provided. The most famous dinner recorded in his reign was that which he gave at Westminster, in the last year of his life, to his nobles, knights, and courtiers. Two swans were then placed on the board, and the King swore, before Heaven and the swans, that he would revenge the murder of Comyn upon Robert Bruce, and punish

the rebellious Scots. This vow of the swans was held to be specially sacred in the palmy days of chivalry.

That was a goodly dinner which Edward the Third gave to Sir John of Hainault, and other Lords of Hainault and Flanders, when they came across the seas to assist him in his war with Scotland. He was then lying at York, with the Queen, his mother, his nobles, and a great company of men-at-arms and archers. On Trinity Sunday, in the monastery of the Black Friars, where he lodged, no fewer than five hundred knights feasted at his table. On her part, the Queen brought sixty ladies and damosels to grace the banquet. "There might have been seen," says Froissart, "plenty of all manner of strange victuals"—strange, that is, to a foreigner—roast beef, and venison from the King's forest, and solid pasties fit only for strong stomachs, with good English ale and cider, and French wines. The ladies and damosels were freshly apparelled, ready for a dance when the tables were removed, and the floor had been newly strewn with sweet-smelling rushes. Unfortunately, after dinner, a sharp contention broke out between the English archers and the foreign grooms and pages. Volleys of clothyard shafts flew fast and far; and heavy blows were given on both sides, until the armed knights came down in their harness, and, striking into the affray, put the archers to flight.

When Edward visited Wark Castle, after the retreat of the Scots, he and his knights were received, in her husband's absence, by the Countess of Salisbury, whose beauty of person and charm of manner made immediate conquest of the King's fancy. He was stricken to the heart, says Froissart—in the English of Lord Berners—with a sparkle of fine love that endured long after; he thought no lady in the world so worthy to be beloved as she. Entering the Castle hand in hand, the Countess led him first into the hall, and afterwards into the chamber, nobly apparelled, Edward fixing his eyes upon her until she was abashed. Then he withdrew into a window recess to rest himself, and fell into a profound reverie; while the Countess went about to make cheer for the lords and knights who had accompanied him, and gave orders that the hall should be dressed for dinner. These duties fulfilled, she came blithely to the King, who was still absorbed in thought, and said: "Dear sir, why do you so study? It

is not fitting that you should do so; rather should you make merry, seeing you have put to flight your enemies." After a while, Edward confessed that he was so taken by her sweet behaviour, her perfect wisdom, good grace, nobleness, and excellent beauty, that he could not but love her, and without her love would be but as dead. Like a chaste and noble gentlewoman, the Countess sharply chided him for using such language to the wife of a valiant knight and baron who had done him so much good service, and withdrew into the hall to hasten the dinner. Then she returned to the King, accompanied by some of his knights, and said: "Sir, if it please you to come into the hall, your knights wait for you to wash. You have fasted too long." So he went to the hall and washed, and sat down among his lords; and the lady also. The King, however, ate but little. He sat still, musing, and, as often as he durst, cast his eyes upon the lady, who, no doubt, was well pleased when, next morning, he left the Castle, and, rejoining his army, marched northward to Berwick.

Having devised his scheme of the Round Table, or grand international tournament in honour of King Arthur, at Windsor, he ordered the erection of a house called the Round Table—now called the Round Tower—wherein to feast the knights who attended the joustings. The work was completed in about ten months, and in January, 1344, the King held the Round Table, at which was inaugurated the famous Order of the Garter. Not only the flower of the English chivalry, but knights from every corner of Christendom attended, and took part in the passages of arms, in the tilts and tourneys, the huntings and the dances, as well as in the noble dinners which the hospitality of Edward provided. Five years later there was again high festival at Windsor, when the King and twenty-five Companions of the Order, "all clothed in mantles of fine woollen cloth of blue colour, powdered with garters, and each wearing the great collar of the Order," went in solemn procession to the Chapel of Saint George, where the ceremonies of installation were performed. Afterwards, there was a glorious dinner, and many dishes were eaten, and much wine was drunken, and lords and ladies, knights and damosels trod not a few "measures" on the rush-strewn floor.

Splendid were the banquets of Richard the Second, who employed, we are told,

no fewer than two thousand cooks in his kitchen, and three hundred scottors; but these figures are evidently fictitious. Fictitious, too, seems the number of guests—ten thousand—who were daily entertained at the King's expense, during the sunny years of his reign, when, "Youth at the prow and Pleasure at the helm," the bark of his fortunes sailed gaily over laughing waves, unconscious of the coming storm and of "the whirlpool" in which it was doomed to destruction. Richard's reign, from a culinary standpoint, is remarkable for having produced one of the earliest cookery books in our language: the celebrated "Forme of Cury," compiled by his master cook, who conceals his name under the initials O. S. S.

Some extracts from this ancient work may be interesting.

It opens with a kind of preamble, setting forth that it was compiled by the chief Master Cook of Richard the Second—who was accounted the best and royallest viander (feeder or epicure) of all the Christian Kings of his times—with the assent and avisement of the Masters of Physic and Philosophy who resided in his Court. And first, it teacheth a man how to make, craftily and wholesomely, common pottages and common meats for the household. Afterwards, it teacheth the making of curious pottages and subtleties—that is, devices in paste, wax, and confections—for all manner of states, both high and low. And the teaching of the form of making pottages of meat, both of flesh and fish, are set here by number and by order.

A few of the recipes will show the quality of the book; but there is this serious disadvantage, that no quantities are given nor any directions as to the length of time to be allowed for the different processes.

How to make Frumenty.—Nym [take] elene Wete and bray it in a mortar wel that the holys [hulls or husks] gon al of, and seyt [seethe] yt til it buste, and nyn yt up, and let yt kele [cool], and nym fayre fresch broth and swete mylk of Almandys or swete mylk of kyne and temper yt al. And nym the yokys of cyryn [eggs], boyle it a lityl, and set yt adon, and messe yt forthefryth fat venyson and fresch muton.

How to make Fritters.—Nym flowre and egryn and grynd [ground] peper and safron and mak thereto a batour [batter] and par(e) aplyn, and kyt(t) hem to brode

penys [pieces as broad as a penny], and kast hem theryn, and fry hem in the batour wyth fresch grus and serve it forthe.

How to make Guse in Hotchpot.—Take Gus and smyte hem on pecys, cast hem in a pot with half wyne and half water, and put thereto a gode qntite of Oynons and erbest. Set it over the fyre and cover it fast; make a luyo [mixture] of brede and blode and lay it therewith. Put thereto powder fort* and serve it.

Capons in Concoys.†—Take Capons and rost hem right hoot that they be not half ynouhz [enough], and heeve hem to gobetts [large pieces], and cast them in a pot. Put thereto clere broth; seeth hem that they be tendre; take brede and the selp broth, and drawe it up yfore [together]; take strong powder, and saffron, and salt, and cast thereto. Take ayron [eggs] and seethe him harde; take out the yolk, and heeve the whyte thereinne. Take the pot from the fyre, and cast the whyte thereinne. Messe the disahe therewith, and lay the yolkes hool, and flour it with cloves.

Lamprys in Galantine.—Take Lamprons and scalde hem; seethe hem; meng [mix] powder of galyngale and some of the broth togyther. Boile it; put thereto powder of gynger and salt; take the Lamprons and bolle hem; lay hem in a dyssh. Lay the seve [broth] above; serve quickly.

In the following recipe the spelling is modernised.

A Fish Pie (Custard of Fysse).—Take loaches, lamprys, and eels; smite them in pieces, and stew them with almond milk and onions; fry the loaches in oil, and lay the fish therein. Cast thereon powder fort and powder douce—made of aromatic spices—with raisins, currants and prunes damsons; take galantine, and the broth therein; swing [shake or mix] it together, and cast in the dish. Bake, and serve it forth.

The profuseness with which our great nobles and ecclesiastics ordered their feasts at this period, may be inferred from the bill of fare provided by George Neville, brother of the King-maker, on his installation as Archbishop of York. This document has often been printed; but I must quote it here, because it is really a notable specimen of a large way of doing things. It reads as if the Archbishop had been provisioning a numerous garrison against a six months' siege:

* A mixture of the warmer spices—pepper, ginger, etc.—pulverised.

† Supposed to be some well-known sauce.

Wheat, three hundred quarters; ale, three hundred tuns; wine, one hundred and four tuns; hippocras, one pipe; oxen, eighty; wild bulls, six; sheep, one thousand and four; calves, three hundred; porkers, three hundred; geese, three thousand; capons, two thousand three hundred; pigs (young ones), two thousand; peacocks, one hundred; cranes, two hundred; kids, two hundred; chickens, two thousand; pigeons, four thousand; conies, four thousand; bitterns, two hundred and four; mallards and teal, four thousand; heronahaws, four thousand; pheasants, two hundred; partridges, five hundred; woodcocks, four hundred; plovers, four hundred; curlews, one hundred; quails, one hundred; egrets, one thousand; reeves, two hundred; harts (bucks and roes), four hundred odd; venison pasties, cold, four thousand; ditto, hot, one thousand five hundred and six; dishes of jelly, plain, one thousand; custards, cold, four thousand; custards, hot, two thousand; pike, three hundred; bream, three hundred; seals, eight; and porpoises, four. Sixty-two cooks were engaged to dress these various articles.

The number of persons entertained was about three thousand five hundred; but the entertainment must have spread over several days, or the consumption of such a mass of edibles would have been impossible. One thing is abundantly clear—that the commissariat in a great nobleman's household must have been admirably organised to permit of the collection of all these various items, more particularly in an age when there were very few facilities of locomotion and conveyance.

A curious account of a wedding-dinner, about the same epoch, will be found in the alliterative poem of "The Tournament of Tottenham" (in the Harleian MSS., but printed by Bishop Percy and others). It

Served was in rich array,
And so they sate in jollity all the long day.

THE ART TREASURES OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

FIRST PART.

I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials, and the things of fame
That do renown this city.

Twelfth Night.

It might be reasonably supposed that a Corporation boasting such antiquity and possessing such enormous wealth as that

of the great City of London, whose possessions have from time to time been increased by noble bequests and gifts, would have, like so many Continental towns of the same antiquity, galleries filled with fine pictures and statuary, with magnificent tapestries and fabrics, with gorgeous specimens of handicraft, with rare carvings and inlays, with the best products of the potter's wheel, and other objects of artistic interest, the gifts and work of its citizens in bygone days, and the landmarks of their progress in taste and culture. It might also be thought that its great trade Guilds, originally, if not now, connected with the trades which give them name, would sedulously have collected together specimens of their handiwork, if only for exhibition to and for the instruction of the members of their craft.

But enquiry proves that there is very little worthy of the name of art belonging to the Corporation, and that the City Companies, though possessing many beautiful things, have, with a few exceptions, done very little in past times to interest the public in the crafts they represent.

Many great and rich men have been numbered amongst the citizens—men who have delighted to spend their wealth in great charities, and in enriching the dignity of the great Corporation to which it was their privilege to belong—but their munificence was seldom connected with Art in any shape or form. It does not seem to have occurred to them that any expenditure for the encouragement of the Fine Arts was advisable, save in later times, when a Company might wish to possess the portrait of the reigning sovereign, in which case they indulged in a picture of the "penny plain and tuppence coloured" class, "ye coste of ye same not to exceed ye somme of three pounds sterling, includyng ye frame."

And yet in the Middle and succeeding ages England was not without painters or skilled artificers, of whose existence there is ample evidence in the few treasures to be found in the City; and, moreover, the ranks of these artists were from time to time recruited by the immigration of foreigners, many of whom, as Holbein, Rabens, Vandyck, and Torregiano, were of the front rank. It would seem, however, that the City Fathers were indifferent to the possession of any of the masterpieces which were executed in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for, whilst these are to be found in many a

stately mansion throughout the country, there is scarcely an ancient picture of any great merit to be found within the length and breadth of the City. In fact, such pictures might be counted on the fingers. The finest of them—the magnificent Holbein possessed by the Barbers' Company, of surpassing interest and value—is generally open to visitors who apply for admission; but owing to the circumscribed space in which it is hung, it can never be properly seen. The same Company also possesses a fine portrait of Inigo Jones, by Vandyck. Countless treasures in the way of plate are to be found—in spite of the fact that so much was melted down in obedience to Royal commands during the Civil War, and at other times—but these are the private property of the Companies, presented to them for their use. They might, however, occasionally be exposed for exhibition.

There is a story told of a French savant who was shown a priceless jewel by a great Duke.

"Thank you, my lord Duke," said the man of science, "for allowing me to share with you the possession of so great a treasure."

"In what way?" said the Duke.

"Why, your Grace can do no more than look at it, and you have allowed me to do the same."

The story might be borne in mind more often than it is in the City and amongst the City Companies, where certain objects of interest are kept locked up from year to year, and, indeed, for, all the pleasure that they give to anybody, might just as well not exist. It is not for an instant suggested that these treasures should pass out of the possession of their owners, but it might be thought that all the combined wealth of the City Companies could find some place for the occasional display of such articles as are not in general use with them, and that this gallery might be under the supervision of the Corporation.

The occasional efforts made by the Drapers' and Turners' Companies to get together exhibitions of modern works show that such things are possible; and some twenty years ago a very fine exhibition of plate and armour was organised by the Ironmongers' Company, of which a well-illustrated catalogue has since been published. Amongst the smaller Companies, that of the Clockmakers is perhaps the only one which has made any effort. A fairly complete collection of clocks has

under their auspices been added to the Guildhall Museum.

It is intended, however, to refer to the Art Treasures of the Companies in a subsequent article, this present one being devoted to the possessions of the Corporation.

The great success of the loan exhibition of pictures held in the summer of 1890 in the Art Gallery of the Corporation seems to prompt this enquiry into the art collections to be found in the City, and the means taken to secure the proper exhibition of such collections.

The crowded state of the rather inconvenient galleries during the exhibition just referred to is good evidence that, provided an exhibition contain works of sufficient merit to attract popular attention, there is always to be found in the City a large contingent of the business population who delight to spend their spare moments in examining works of art. This exhibition did contain many well-known pictures, notably Reynolds's superb portraits of the three Ladies Waldegrave; some fine French and Dutch pictures; several of Sir John Millais's best landscapes; Sir Frederick Leighton's beautiful "Summer Moon"; and a splendid collection of paintings by those English artists who are known as the Pre-Raphaelite school. The crowd which daily flocked to see these works was composed of all sorts and conditions of men—warehousemen, clerks, office-boys, merchants, and professional men for the most part—but, at the same time, there was a large sprinkling of people who had evidently gone into the City for the special purpose of seeing the exhibition. During the luncheon hours the galleries were so thronged that it was very difficult to see the pictures at all. This satisfactory state of affairs was surely sufficient encouragement for the enlargement of the idea: if not for the formation of a finer permanent collection, at any rate, for the greater frequency of such loan exhibitions. The provision of some such recreation or instruction is a debt which the Corporation, in its position as trustee of such enormous wealth and position, owes to the public. It is quick enough to recognise its indebtedness in other ways; might not the Arts also claim a humble share of those attentions which are lavished on Burnham Beeches, and such far-away spots? There are many people in the City proper to whom a free picture gallery of good quality would be a boon; and these are not only of the wealthier classes.

To the majority of workers in the City life is almost a barren wilderness without enlightenment—a walk along a narrow street hedged in on either side by high walls without openings. Very occasionally a trip may be taken to the classic shades of Epping or Burnham; but a picture gallery would be always with them, and, as has been frequently shown in the East End, a well-filled picture-gallery or museum is an oasis in the desert of the daily life of such people. It is possible that they may not thoroughly understand pictures; indeed, that they should do so is impossible, and the same might be said of the best of us; but yet it must not be said that they do not enjoy them. Thorough understanding can only come with special knowledge and training; but it is quite possible that those who have not this special knowledge, may, and do, appreciate an art in its broader sense, although this want of knowledge will not allow them to follow and appreciate its refinements and intricacies. All persons are, more or less, fond of listening to music, and are capable of deriving great pleasure therefrom, and yet many have no technical knowledge of music; nor could they analyse their enjoyment, save that they feel enlightened and charmed. Can it be said that they do not appreciate music? According as their taste is cultivated so will they appreciate, and this appreciation is limited by their want of technical knowledge; they will miss the refinements, but they will appreciate the broad lights and shades. So according to their lights, the uncultivated and uneducated may reap a large amount of enjoyment and interest from a picture gallery. But where in the City is the opportunity to be found? The museums and picture galleries of London are not to be found within the precincts of the City; nor is it for a moment suggested that the collections in the National Gallery or the British Museum should be moved; but it is difficult to understand the policy of an officialism which decrees that that most useful of all galleries, the South Kensington Museum, should find a local habitation in a neighbourhood devoted exclusively to fashion, and far away from the bustling centres of business and labour.

It is not the votaries of fashion who patronise, nor is their jaded taste likely to appreciate, the National Art Treasures. It is to the busy worker, whose moments of recreation are few, that such collections mostly appeal. Should society take it into

its head that Art and the pursuit of culture is to be fashionable, and a thing to be done, then society has only to deposit itself in its carriage and it is whirled away in a few moments to the particular spot where, for the time being, Art is to be found; aye, even to the uttermost parts of the East End, should fashion so decree, and provided that society will meet the rest of itself there. But with the busy worker these conditions do not hold, and that the public galleries may be of any use to him, it is necessary that they shall be handy to his place of business, and certainly not situated at the other end of the town, as in the case of South Kensington. He wants a place where he can spend twenty minutes or half an hour, where he is free to come and go as he likes. Such a twenty minutes might be of inestimable benefit to a man who has his eyes open. Again it may be asked: what opportunities are there in the City for such a man? What have the guardians of this wealthy Corporation done for the enlightenment of its citizens, for the instruction and pleasure of the thousands of workers who each day toil within its precincts, and help to add to the sum of its greatness?

In other English towns—Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Nottingham—the museums and picture galleries of the Corporations grow apace, and are housed in fairly central positions, within reach of the working crowd. In London, perhaps, the same circumstances do not apply, for here are to be found the great national collections, and these must necessarily be centrally placed; but within the City proper there is little in the shape of Art to attract the public. There are, it is true, the Corporation Picture Gallery, and the Guildhall Museum and Library, all free of admission. Of these, the Library is a most successful institution, nearly always well occupied; the Museum, considered as the property of so great a Corporation, is inferior. But what shall be said of the collection of pictures? This is housed in two fairly spacious galleries situated on the east side of Guildhall Yard, and is perhaps one of the poorest collections ever brought together in a public gallery. Had it not been for Alderman Boydell, the originator of the Shakespeare Gallery scheme in 1789, the collection could hardly have come into existence, for the Corporation itself is responsible for a very small portion of the exhibition. It is made up to a large extent of gifts by

Alderman Boydell and others, amongst whom the artists themselves are frequently found—the latter a proceeding not likely to add to the value of the collection.

Only some four or five of the pictures have been acquired by purchase; amongst these are "The Death of Wat Tyler," by Northcote, and "The Death of David Rizzio," by Ople, both of heroic size, and painted at a period when English art was at a low ebb. There are several pictures of the same period in this collection, presented by Alderman Boydell, but amongst the whole of them it would be difficult to pick out one of any interest or value artistically. Let any one who wishes to understand what the art of this period was like, turn over the illustrations of the Boydell Shakespeare, which, with one or two exceptions, are very bad, and yet were painted by the leading artists of that day. Then there is the inevitable portrait of the Queen, by Hayter, an artist already forgotten, although he was the fashionable portrait-painter of fifty years ago. There are also various portraits by Sir William Beechey, one of which is fine, while the rest may be called respectable; a fine portrait of Richard Clark, by Sir Thomas Lawrence; and a portrait of Sir Charles Pratt, afterwards Lord Camden, ascribed to Reynolds. This latter is a rather suspicious picture; a square of canvas on which the head and shoulders are painted, appears to have been cut out, and judging by the quality of the work in the head, a copy has been substituted, or else Reynolds must have been nodding when he painted it. An examination of the back of the canvas might settle the question. A gigantic canvas of Copley's, "The Siege of Gibraltar," which occupies one end of the room, and a still more uninteresting painting, by a Frenchman named Alaux, of a deputation of the Corporation waiting upon Louis Philippe at Windsor, complete the list of pictures in the first gallery.

There are some few pieces of sculpture, mostly busts; the most interesting is Mr. Onslow Ford's statue of Mr. Henry Irving as Hamlet: a fine characteristic and well-modelled piece of sculpture, and, moreover, an excellent likeness. It is presented by the artist, and has only recently been placed in the gallery. In this case, at least, the gallery is the gainer by an artist's generosity, and the time-honoured remark as to the advisability of looking a gift-horse in the mouth does not apply.

The second and smaller gallery is of more interest than the first; the pictures are as a rule smaller, and do not give the same idea of unrealised ambition. There are some small Dutch pictures of no great merit; two views of London by Samuel Scott, which are interesting, as well from a topographical point of view as from the fact that Scott was a very good landscape-painter, who died before the foundation of the Royal Academy, in 1768; two fine interiors by David Roberts; a good portrait by Reynolds; and on one wall five modern paintings, the gift of various Companies—of these, "Flirtation," by Seymour Lucas, and "The Stream in Summer-time," by B. W. Leader, are very good specimens. The whole gallery is, however, dominated by an exceedingly vulgar and gaudy painting of large size by a foreign artist, whose name it is not worth while to record, which was exhibited at the Italian Exhibition, and then deposited here by the artist, possibly with the hope of selling it. But why did the Corporation allow such a hideous monstrosity to be exhibited under their sanction? Certainly, it were far better that the public should go without, or be treated to the gloomy oppressiveness of Northcote and Opie, than be forced to look at such ruthless vulgarity, both as to subject and execution, as is to be found in this picture. Such generosity on the part of artists is not to be encouraged, even though it may enable the otherwise bare walls of the gallery to be covered. There is a smaller room out of this gallery, in which are hung various engravings, amongst them an old one of the Barbers' Holbein. Connecting these two rooms is a short passage, the walls of which are hung with some fairly executed pencil-drawings illustrating the destruction of old London Bridge and the building of the new one, which have a certain interest as topographical records, but as works of art the quality is not good enough for public exhibition.

And this is the collection of pictures of the richest Corporation in the world—a collection which contains hardly an interesting, much less a fine picture!

Nor is the collection to be found in the Museum of much greater value. One fine Roman pavement, a few old specimens of pottery, a few manuscripts, and some old shoes, and the tale is told. Most of the things to be found there are of purely antiquarian interest, and do not appeal to the general public. A few good specimens,

showing the progress of modern manufactures, would be worth all the old broken bottles in the world.

The memory is carried back almost with shame to the magnificent galleries and museums of the Continental municipalities: of the Hague; of Antwerp; of Brussels; the Bargello at Florence; and the Christian Museum at Brescia. And even the efforts of our own provincial Corporations should bring a blush to the cheek of their London brethren.

True it is, that of late years, in the cause of art education, a palatial City and Guilds' Technical Institute has been built and endowed; but why—the agonised cry once more arises—was South Kensington selected as the site? Was it because the Exhibition Commissioners had some land to sell? An increase of the funds and buildings of the London Technical Institute would have answered better. The question of technical education lies, however, outside the scope of this article, the object of which is to call attention to the apparent want of effort on the part of the Corporation to procure even a fairly good art collection. Indifference on the part of officialism to Art in any shape or form has always been an English characteristic, and when any question relative to the purchase of works of art or the laying out of streets for architectural effect arises, the solution is arrived at from a purely mercantile point of view.

It is a matter of great regret that the Corporation cannot see its way to spending occasionally a little money on pictures, and making some effort to improve the quality of its collection. It is not suggested that large sums should be spent in acquiring the priceless works of the old masters; such works, unless a special opportunity occurs, are rightly to be purchased for the nation, and placed in the National Gallery. But as in Manchester and Liverpool, a few modern pictures might from time to time be added to the collection; they would, if carefully selected, add greatly to the interest of the galleries, and might turn the present gloomy exhibition into an attractive one. The cost, too, would not be much—certainly a mere drop in the ocean in comparison to the large sums spent by the Corporation in other matters.

Another direction in which the collection might be developed, and one which would be singularly appropriate, is in the acquisition of pictures of topographical interest, such as views of Old and New London,

and pictures of London life. There are two such views in the gallery by Samuel Scott, which have been already referred to. This artist painted many such views, and his works, amongst others, should be sought after.

Such an exhibition would have great historical interest, apart from any artistic value that it might possess, and would, moreover, very appropriately be in the keeping of a Corporation which is justly proud of its history and antiquity.

Farthermore, it is hoped that the magnificent loan exhibition of last summer is only the forerunner of many others; its great success alone would justify its repetition, and the great willingness with which the possessors of fine pictures come forward with their treasures removes many a stumbling-block, which would otherwise hinder those responsible for the exhibition.

ELECTRIC RAILWAYS.

It is often said that London, while having a most excellent and cheap service of omnibuses, has about the very worst cabs of any great city, and is also very badly off for train service—not as regards the country, but between the various suburbs, and across the Metropolitan Districts. Perhaps the cry as to cabs is rather exaggerated, for the hansoms of to-day are by no means bad vehicles, being, in the majority of cases, at all events very decently horsed, while the four-wheelers are distinctly improving; but in the case of train accommodation the outcry is justified. What have we north of the Thames? We have the Metropolitan and District Railways—very worthy in their way, no doubt, despite the grumble as to overcrowding, which can hardly be avoided at certain times of the day—and the North London Railway. But these railways are not enough, and do not go straight enough to their destination. Take the case of a man who wants to go from King's Cross, or Paddington, to Charing Cross; he had better take a cab unless he wants to go a most wearisome way round; and the same thing may be said of the journey from Charing Cross to Farringdon Street—here he would have to make the round of the City before he reached his destination. No; the Underground Railway may be very good, but it is not enough. There is another objection to this line, and that is

the smoke. It is common enough to hear the Underground Railway held up to execration as an important item in the fog manufacture of London. How much truth there may be in the charge I don't know; but it is quite certain that the more smoke hanging about, the more fog there is likely to be, and conversely the most simple logic will show that if you diminish the smoke you will diminish the fog.

Well, what say our readers to a railway without smoke, a railway comparatively inexpensive to construct, and a railway cheap to work? It sounds impossible; but if you will come a short journey with me to-day, I will show you a railway which answers that description, and I think you will find that the City and South London Railway goes a long way towards solving the problem of internal communication in London.

The motive power of the City and South London Railway is electricity, which is, as a driving power, most certainly in this country entirely in its infancy; and although the line has been open but a short time, it most certainly has been proved that it is a success. The line runs from King William Street, in the City, to Stockwell, with four intervening stations, and the actual rails are contained in two tubes, one for down trains, and one for up trains, which connect at the termini. These tubes are of iron rings, and the mode of building them was as follows: Of course the beginning, the sinking of the shafts, and so on, was a matter of every-day work, but the building of the tubes was a very different matter. The principal factor was a big circular steel shield, as they called it—as a matter of fact it was a tube of about eleven feet diameter. Towards the end which was to be driven into the earth were fixed, all round the interior, strong hydraulic presses, and then, the earth in front being somewhat loosened by men, the actual process began. Inside the end of the shield furthest away from the earth were built up these rings of iron. Each ring consisted of six segments and a key piece, and each ring advanced the length of the tube eighteen inches, and was firmly bolted to the one preceding it. As these successive rings were built up, the actual tube began to come in touch with the hydraulic presses, whereupon the power was turned on, and then, as the iron tube could not go back, the shield had to advance into the earth, which was cleared from the interior of the

shield, and the work of building was resumed. But then came a difficulty. As the shield advanced and left the tube behind, there was a space of an inch—the thickness of the shield—remaining all round the tube. This could not be left as it was, or a settling of the ground above would take place, and claims for compensation would rush in from householders, water companies, gas companies, and—well, there was no saying where it might end—so this space had to be filled up, and this operation was done by liquid cement. This was accomplished by leaving originally two holes in each segment of the rings, and then forcing, by compressed air machines, the cement into these holes, beginning at the lowest, and working away at that till the cement appeared at the next above, and then plugging up the first and transferring the machine to the second, and so on, till the tube was encased in a solid cover of cement. At all the stations subsequently the company had to take down considerable lengths of the tubes, in order to build larger tunnels for the platforms; and when this was done it was found that the cement had, in some cases, penetrated far beyond the original inch, either into an air-hole or into some hollow where the shield had not cut clean, and the cement taken out—I saw a specimen—was as hard and firm as any stone.

On the whole, the material cut through did not present many great difficulties; but in one place gravel and sand did cause an obstruction, which was got over in an ingenious manner. Of course, in an ordinary tunnel the method followed when water is met with is to set machines at work to pump it out as quickly as it comes in; but here the question of compensation would again come in, and some other method which would not disturb the surface had to be resorted to. The method adopted was to proceed under compressed air. By forcing the air against the sand and gravel the water was kept back, but the air escaped through the water and sand and gravel at a great rate. This was avoided by the means of the cement, which was driven into the soil where the leak was, and then work could go on again. The average distance covered each day was thirteen feet six inches at each working-face.

Now, having seen how the tunnels were made, let us go to King William Street, and proceed to Stockwell, for there are all

the works connected with the line. We pay our twopence—the fare is twopence for any distance—and, receiving no ticket, pass through a turnstile, and walk, not on to a platform, but into a lift, and so down seventy feet into the depths of the earth. There are two lifts at each station, the average depth being fifty feet, and one tube being over the other at the intermediate stations, the same lifts can serve both platforms. They have a curious sort of door, these lifts—doors composed of iron, which do not open or shut in the usual way, nor yet run on rollers, but which literally shut up as trellis-work. People are admitted on one side, and leave the lift on the opposite side, thus avoid all crushing.

Well, here we are on the platform, and here is the train waiting for us. It consists of an engine and three cars. The cars are round on the roof, and fit pretty closely to the tube, while the engine we will see better presently.

“Any more going on? Right, forward!” and away we go, and experience rather a shock to our feelings. Electricity! Yes, anything connected with electricity must be smooth, we think, which is extremely foolish of us, for as the cars run on ordinary wheels on ordinary rails, we should only be justified in expecting the ordinary amount of shaking, and that is what we get.

The railway seems to consist of most steep gradients, and extraordinary curves. We start down a descent with a gradient of one in fourteen, and round a curve of one hundred and forty feet radius, and when we have passed under the Thames we go up an ascent with a gradient of one in thirty, which is pretty good climbing, and has an immediate effect on the electric lighting arrangements, for the light comes from the same supply as the motive power, and consequently when more motive power is necessary less light is obtainable. This is noticeable at the start after each stoppage at the various stations, which are at High Street, Borough; at the Elephant and Castle; New Street, Kennington Park; the Oval; and the terminus at Stockwell, which we reach in about fourteen minutes. Coming into Stockwell Station, we go round as sharp a curve as it is possible to imagine a train—even a short one like this—on. As the doors of the carriages are open—the doors are at the ends—it is almost impossible to see from one carriage into another, for the next to you seems to have disappeared into

a corner, and does not come into view again till we are safely in the station.

Now we will follow the rest of the passengers to the lift, and up to the open air, and then proceed to visit the works where all the motive power used on the line—for driving the engines or moving the lifts—from Stockwell to King William Street is produced. As we go we give a look at the station, and do not feel very greatly moved at the architectural beauty displayed. The stations, except that in King William Street, are all alike, and each consists of a small, square building, with a dome very many sizes too large for it; but the domes have their use, for in the space afforded by them are placed all the chains, and ropes, and various machinery for working the lifts. These lifts, chains, ropes, and machinery, the people connected with them say will bear a weight of two hundred tons; four tons being about the heaviest they are likely to be called on to carry.

Now we pass into the front garden of a good-sized house in the Clapham Road which is used for general purposes, and, going round the house, find ourselves at the fountain head of the Electric Railway. In the middle of the space are two tall chimneys, which, strange to say, although the fires are kept up with the commonest coal, give forth no smoke. If only all chimneys would do the same! But what we want most to see is the interior of this building on our left. Let us enter, and we find that the first half contains engines under repair, and so we have a good chance of examining an engine. The engines themselves carry no power at all, but pick it up, so to speak, as they go. The electric power is carried all along the line by a steel conductor, which forms, as it were, a third rail; the engines have what is technically termed a shoe, but what is, in reality, a metal plate, which touches this third rail and forms the connection. Come up on this engine and see what a simple affair it is—there is absolutely no complicated machinery whatever. One lever for going forward, or for reversing; one lever for regulating the power; and two brake-handles—one an ordinary hand-brake, and the other a Westinghouse brake. The engine requires no fire, no stoking, no water—in fact, nothing at all, except a supply of compressed air for the Westinghouse brake. This air is taken in at the Stockwell terminus. It can hardly take a man long to learn to control one of

these engines—in fact, the only difficulty would be the fear of bringing the short train to a too sudden standstill by means of the powerful brake.

Passing on through this division we come to the actual engine-room; and as electricity and watches do not go well together, we had better leave them at the entrance. Here is the actual motive power made by those three huge machines; from this room is the whole length of the line controlled. Two machines are always at work, while the third is always ready to begin, should anything go wrong with the others. The line for inspection is divided in four circuits, and in this corner of the room are indicators, by means of which, at a glance, you can see what power is being used on what part of the line; while another indicator shows the leakage all over the line—which averages somewhat a little less than one horse-power. As we walk down the room we become overcome with the sense of the mighty power of these machines, with their continuous action and wonderful result in the production of such a mighty power as electricity. When we have passed these three mighty engines, we come to what may be called the low-comedy engines, which seem to start and leave off as their fancy chooses. First one has a turn, and then number two takes a start, and even number three occasionally is not left out in the cold. These are the hydraulic machines, which work all the lifts on the system. They work automatically, forcing the pressure water into the pipes as room is made by a lift working and releasing any amount of water into the waste pipes; and if one engine is not strong enough—as will happen if two lifts are working at the same time—another helps it. It is not quite right, however, to talk about waste pipes, for there is no waste here—all water when it has done its work is returned by a second pipe to the tanks at Stockwell, and is ready to be used again.

There is only one more shed up here, and that is the shed where the rolling stock out of use is kept, where trains are made up, and so on. There is nothing much to see here, so we will make our way back to the station—not by the way we came, but by the tunnel through which the rolling stock is brought up to the works. The railway practise what they preach, for they take their tunnel here

under their own house. The line goes down this tunnel till it reaches the proper level at an incline of one in three and a half. It is hardly necessary to say that the engines do not run up here, but that engines and carriages are hauled up here by wire rope and steam power.

It does not take us long to reach the level of the line, though there is an empty train in the way, which, as the conductor does not reach up here, is in darkness, and through which we have to grope our way; but when we do come down to the working part of the line, we had better look where we are going, and not step on the conductor, or the consequences might be more surprising than pleasant.

So, taking care we follow our guide towards the platform, only stopping to have a look at a small collection of insignificant looking pipes, one of which has a brass ring on the end. And then we are told that these insignificant pipes are a powerful draining machine—of course moisture must collect in a tunnel—worked by hydraulic power, and capable of lifting one hundred and fifty gallons of water a minute to the height of two hundred feet. So, surviving the perils of the conductor, we arrive at the platform, and as one of us forgot his watch in the machine room, we have to wait, and can watch the people as they come and go. It is curious enough to see a man critically examine the engine as much as to say, "I know the power's concealed there somewhere," while very many seem to have a lurking suspicion of the reservoirs round the sides, which contain the air for the Westinghouse brake. But it is much more curious to see them jump as the engine moves out, and as it goes emits a little flash of lightning, which has a most weird effect.

Here comes the watch, however, and as a train is just starting we may as well go in it, and be taken back to King William Street and the matter-of-fact City, after a short visit which seems to us a visit, indeed, to the realms of wonder and mystery.

Such is the Electric Railway as evolved by the City and South London Railway Company. The Company have already applied for powers to extend their line to Islington, or rather to make another line connected with King William Street Station with a subway; and in America—we were in front of the Americans this time—a company is being formed to connect Jersey City with New

York, under the Hudson, in the same way. The present railway seems to be an excellent beginning; it remains to be seen if the system can be extended.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE was not the smallest loophole of an excuse for Sir Everard to get through, and to get out of keeping his promise to take his wife to Coal-quay that Saturday. She showed no symptom of cold; the day was warm and sunny—a Saint Luke's summer day. Beatrix had every minute mapped out for them both. Her mapping did not seem to include many minutes to be spent in her husband's society; but that could not be helped.

"You cannot sit by while I am interviewing cooks, dear," she explained, "and you must not be tortured by watching my agonies under the dentist's hands. We will shop in the morning; then lunch; then the County Club for you; and cooks and dentists for me. You have Mr. Gregson to see, too. I shall try to be at the station for the 5.40."

"My dear, what can you do with your time till 5.40! I particularly wanted you to come with me to the Gregsons'. They will be quite hurt if we don't have tea there. I will pick you up at four."

"Quite impossible, Everard. You seem to think a cook can be caught in a day. I shall have to spend my whole afternoon running between Mrs. Day's register office and Mr. Stone's dental surgery."

"You may find a cook at once."

"No such luck. Mrs. Blake told me there were none to be had. She spent last Saturday from ten till six at Mrs. Day's, and saw nothing worth twopence."

"Then why waste time by going at all?"

"You would see some reason in it if you were to be shortly left dinnerless."

"Your appointment with Stone is for three, I believe. I will pick you up there at four."

"At four I shall be at Mrs. Day's."

"I will pick you up there, then."

"Cookless, I shall be immovable!"

Argument and persuasion were alike useless. Sir Everard resigned himself. They went to the dressmaker; they bought new songs, also new fans, and

silks, and photograph frames, and pun-kahs, and big spiders, and china pigs, and gallons of enamel, and ribbons and rushes, and grasses, and yards and yards of art muslin—all of which ate up a great part of the day; they lunched, and then they parted, Beatrix on the cook and dentist quest, Sir Everard for the County Club.

It was a quarter to three. Beatrix, knowing that time and tide and dentists wait for no man, could only look in at Mrs. Day's to say she would come back. As luck would have it, the long-sought treasure was there waiting for her. The deed was done at once; the cook was engaged; and Beatrix went to the dentist with an easy mind.

That great man looked at Lady Treverton's tooth; told her it was not ready for stopping; that she must return that day three weeks; and charged her two guineas for the news.

It was only a quarter-past three. She would do some more shopping, and return to Mrs. Day's to be picked up there by Sir Everard at four.

She walked down Whyte Street, the principal street of Coaliquay. She was considering deeply whether she should not change one of the songs she had bought in the morning, when she became aware that somebody had recognised her with a little ecstatic exclamation. She looked in the direction of the exclamation, and saw coming down the steps of an hotel a pretty, faded woman, gorgeously dressed in a red plush cloak, a small scarlet bonnet nestling in a foam of fair, fluffy hair, very dirty, pale, Snède gloves, a multitude of bracelets and bangles, and imitation diamonds in her ears.

"You do not remember me," said this odd apparition, in pretty French, and a tone expressive of pathetic reproach.

"Of course I remember you, Princess," said Beatrix, delightedly. "I am charmed to see you. Are you staying here? May I come in and hear all about you?"

"Please come in," said the Princess; "it will be so kind. It is rather far upstairs, if you don't mind."

It was up, and up, and up. Beatrix reached the last landing panting, feeling as if she had left her breath halfway down all those stairs. The Princess ushered her into a small, untidy room, where, amongst a chaos of shabby bedroom furniture, the remains of a lunch, heaped up dresses, and open trunks, a

chair was found, and relieved of its burden of music-books. Lady Treverton sat on the chair, and the Princess sat on the bed.

"I am afraid it is not very comfortable," Her Highness apologised. "I should not have brought you in if I had had time to consider, and had not acted on impulse. I only thought how pleased I was to see you."

Beatrix might have echoed the words. She felt very much embarrassed, though the Princess did not. She, too, had followed an impulse, only thinking how pleased she was to see her friend. Now she became guiltily aware of excuses to be made for the lack of all practical friendliness on her part. It had been hard enough to explain by letter how Sir Everard did not care for music sufficiently to take the long journey from Oswaldburn, even for one evening; it would be much more awkward to account for such apathy now they were face to face in Coaliquay, within a few yards of the Grand Theatre.

The Princess, being the innocent party, was free to follow her natural instincts, and could not have been more perfectly at ease, and could not have betrayed less consciousness of commercial disappointment, had she been receiving Lady Treverton in the Palazzo Castelluca at Rome. Beatrix, feeling ashamed and sorry beyond all hiding, blundered at once upon the awkward subject.

"I was so very much disappointed that we could not come to the opera," she said, earnestly. "The weather has been so bad, and Sir Everard is not very strong. I hope you have had a very good time of it?"

"Not quite so good as we hoped," the Princess answered, evasively, flushing slightly.

Beatrix instantly and naturally attributed the evasion and the blush to remembrance of her falsified promises, and she said, hastily:

"I am so sorry. We are only here accidentally to-day; Sir Everard and I both had business. It would have been delightful to stay for the opera to-night. I suppose you play to-night? But it is too late; there would not be a chance of a seat."

"Do persuade him to stay," coaxed the Princess, her face lighting. "I am sure there are plenty of seats."

"Thanks, so much; but though I don't mind myself, he would not like a back seat. He always complains he cannot see

and hear over people's heads, and a seat at the side gives him a pain in his neck."

"But there are middle seats in the front row."

Then the Princess coloured again, and Beatrix read the blush aright this time—there were hardly any seats taken for that evening.

"Then I will take two," she said, quickly, feeling for her purse, "and try to persuade him to stay. Oh! I am so sorry, I have not enough money. I did not bring much, as my husband was with me, and I paid my last guineas to the dentist."

The poor Princess's face fell quite beyond control this time. Beatrix could not bear to see it. She forgot how Sir Everard had refused even pecuniary countenance to the Opera Company, and she said, beseechingly:

"Please trust me. Let me have two stalls, and I will send you a cheque on Monday. I forgot—we have no evening garments."

"Thank you, dear Lady Treverton. Dress will not matter. In fact, I am afraid you may find rather an empty house. Saturday night is not fashionable in Coaliquay, it seems."

Here a knock at the door interrupted them. It was followed at once by a very pretty girl, who darted in, and then stopped short, seeing such a well-dressed, stately lady in the room.

"Lady Treverton wants two stalls for to-night, Madge," said the Princess, in her broken English. "Please tell Mr. Bolter to find them and keep them."

"I don't think he'll have much difficulty in finding them, or keeping them, either," retorted Madge, angry at being turned out of the room by the Princess, who thought herself such a great lady, though she only sang second to Mademoiselle Marguerite Duval. That Princess, with her airs, required keeping in her place. She was only fit to be in the chorus; and Bolter spoilt all the operas by putting her forward. As if people cared to hear a Princess sing, if she hadn't a voice worth ten shillings a week!

"Well, make haste, dear, and ask him what can be done," said the Princess, in her kind but majestic way.

"I wasn't aware that I was your servant," returned Mademoiselle Marguerite Duval, with a strong Irish accent. "There isn't much hurry, seeing there are no seats taken yet for to-night. Serves Bolter right."

But in spite of her pertness she stood

in some awe of the Princess, and withdrew.

"That is our prima-donna," said the Princess, with a little, anxious smile.

"Is she going to sing to-night?" Beatrix asked, absently.

"No; that is why she is so cross. The manager has not been very fortunate here; and it happened that the people took a fancy to applaud my Donna Anna on Tuesday more than her Zerlina, so it was repeated on Thursday; and to-night we do 'Sonnambula,' in which I play Amina, the only leading part ever entrusted to me. She need not be jealous, for it is only because the people here are not musical, but like Princesses."

"And you have not done well here?" Beatrix said, with such heartfelt sorrow that the Princess simply answered:

"It has nearly ruined us."

"But it will not affect you!"

"It affects me this way: the rest of the company lay the blame on me. They always do. They say I cannot sing, and people don't believe in my title. I have not had notice yet, but it may come any day."

"I should think you would be glad to get away from such people!" exclaimed Beatrix, indignantly.

"One must live—at least, my children must; and there seems no other way. It is all my own fault. I am stupid at learning how to make the others like me. They think I am proud and disagreeable."

"Your children are not here!"

"No; Madame Leclair has them at Brighton. She is a very kind woman who was in this company once."

Beatrix pondered helplessly how to help. She could not offer money to this stately lady, who spoke so simply and quietly of what must be terrific anxieties that no one might presume to imply any need of help. Besides, how could she help? Was it not forbidden?

The Princess turned the conversation to Bigorre, and their subsequent travels. She was very charming, indeed. Beatrix was more than ever fascinated by her simple grace, her proud independence, her unflinching courage. She must indeed be a real Princess, tested as she was, not like Hans Andersen's Princess, by sleeping on a pea, but by the tremendous trial of the imitation diamonds, the squalid surroundings, the usually undignified position of sitting on a bed.

"It is wonderful how you can be so bright all through such a life," Beatrix could not help exclaiming. "You are like a fairy, who can turn the commonest things into gold."

"Oh, no, indeed I am not. I wish I were, and then I should turn myself into somebody clever. It is not only that I should like to sing and act better, but I should learn how to make the singers like me, and I should not be so stupid with my hands. See this room—how untidy! I have never learnt to do without a maid, and I have never made enough money to hire one."

It was only the darkening of the autumn afternoon that reminded Beatrix of the flight of time. She looked at her watch. A quarter past five! Where would Sir Everard be? What could he think of her absence?

She said a hasty good-bye to the Princess, promising to write, forgetting all about her intention of bringing Sir Everard to the opera. She went downstairs alone. On the first landing she met Signor Montefalco. She would have passed him with a bow, but he started with surprise and pleasure, and came up to her.

"Miladi has been to visit our Princess? She intends being present at the 'Son-nambula' to-night! What good fortune to come at the end of such a miserable week!"

"I am afraid I shall not be able to come," she answered, coldly. "I am on my way home now."

Oh, the poor Princess! What a disappointment for her! She had so counted on Lady Treverton's friendship. Might he have the honour of finding her ladyship's carriage?

"I want a cab," she said, shortly, turning to the hall-porter.

Her ladyship should have one in ten minutes.

Ten minutes!

"This is not London," said Montefalco, smiling. "They do not whistle for cabs. It is a serious business ordering one here." Her ladyship could walk to the station in less time. It would quite overwhelm him with honour if he might be allowed to show her the way.

Beatrix was aghast at the assurance of the offer. Then suddenly she bethought herself that he could tell her how to help the Princess, so she accepted his escort. The streets were dark, but full of passengers, none in the least likely to know

her by sight. There was not much time; the station was at the end of the street. She went to the point at once, and held him to it.

She heard of the heavy losses incurred at both Leeds and Coaliquay by the failure of Italian opera to draw. The manager was all but ruined. The company demanded Jonah to be cast into the sea of misfortune to avert utter catastrophe; and the Jonah must be the Princess.

"She is terribly in debt already," Montefalco declared. "She has boarded her boys at Brighton for the whole time of the tour, with directions that they have to have every comfort and luxury of their station. Their station! And they are Princes! She is very brave, she has kept up her courage wonderfully; but this Coaliquay affair has about broken her spirit. She is still only an amateur, or she would not let debt and disappointments distress her so much."

Beatrix was deeply touched by Montefalco's genuine sympathy and enthusiastic admiration for the Princess, who had already told her that he had always been her faithful friend and champion, thus giving, alas! increased strength and bitterness to the jealousy of the women who were all more or less in love with the handsome tenor. If she could only help her! But Montefalco could suggest nothing.

"It is only in romances," he said, "that beautiful, distressed ladies take the world by storm by their talents. She has not voice enough for the operatic stage. She has no dramatic talent."

A light had flashed through Beatrix's mind. Romances! Talents! Had not she talents, now lying useless, while this woman who needed talents had little or none? Were her talents given to her to waste? Was it right to let them rust away? Was it not a sacred duty to use them, if not for herself, for others, like any other riches? From henceforth she would dedicate her pen to charity. She would begin at once; she would finish the half-written Italian story, and the Princess should have the cheque it brought.

In the colonnade before the station she stopped.

"Thank you for bringing me," she said, earnestly. "I will make a promise. I feel guilty of the whole of this last disappointment. If I had stood by her it might have made all the difference. I must make it up to her. Will you tell her that she need not have the least fear

for the future, for herself, or for her children? I know of a way; I cannot tell you yet; I can only assure her that I can manage to keep my promise. I know you have been very good to her, signor. Go on being good to her, and you shall not lose by it. I will do all in my power—”

She stopped, for she did not want to tell him how she meant to help, and she would not for the world have wounded the Princess's delicate pride and her independent spirit by letting her guess she would send money. She wanted them to fancy that her scheme was of influencing managers and the British aristocracy. She had not planned out yet how she would do the deed. In her ignorant kindheartedness she fancied she might persuade managers to engage this third-rate songstress to fill great parts at great salaries which she would augment from the modest amount they considered her abilities were worth. She could not tell him with her lips; but all and more came pouring from her eager, enthusiastic eyes—all the earnest resolve, the vague planning, the longing that filled her, which she could hardly silence.

“Good-bye,” she said, smiling gratefully.

“A rivederci,” he returned, bowing low over her hand. And Sir Everard from the station entrance saw them under the gaslight.

Beatrix hurried into the station, passing her husband without seeing him in the crowd. He did not follow her; he stood apart, petrified.

Was it possible that such a terrible thing should have happened as that she should have so deceived him? He recognised the Italian at once; he recalled her eagerness to come to Coaliquay this week—this week, advertised on every wall and hoarding as the week of the Italian Opera Company, amongst whom the Princess Castella and Signor Montefalco were proclaimed in enormous letters.

He had gone to Mrs. Day's at four, only to hear that her ladyship had engaged a cook before three, and had left at once. He went to the dentist's, to hear that her ladyship had spent a few minutes only there, her tooth not requiring stopping at

present. He had then come to the station to seek her; then gone to keep his appointment with Mr. Gregson, thinking that she must have gone on there before him. Then he had come back to the station; surely she would turn up in time for the 5.40 train.

She had turned up—with Montefalco.

He had watched their emotional parting—her upturned, pleading eyes, his theatrically expressed devotion. He remembered her guilty agitation last night when he had suggested singing lessons.

Last night! That happy evening!

Oh, false! false beyond all words! A traitress who betrayed with kisses! She had been cold and estranged all the week, until she needed to blind and wheedle him.

He would not—he could not return to Oswaldburn with her. Wild thoughts of rushing away by train to some unknown land seized him, or of flinging himself under the next rushing express.

“Oh, Everard, I am so glad. I quite thought I had missed you. Come, we have just time. The parcels are all here. Here is Colonel Blake. How do you do, Colonel? Yes, it will be delightful to travel together.”

Sir Everard heard the frank, pleasant voice as if he were waking from a dream. Could he have been mistaken. The stately lady who put her hand on his arm to hurry him to the train even looked so different from the eager girl he saw a minute ago parting from the Italian. There was not time to understand that she had put over her tight little sealskin the long fur cloak she had left in the waiting-room. There was not time to find a reason for not going by that train. Colonel Blake was chattering like a magpie at his left ear about some bye-election just over. Beatrix, on his right arm, was guiding him, like resistless Fate, to the waiting train. The bell was ringing; doors were slamming; porters shouting. It required all his reeling remnant of mind to get out of the way of rushing loads of luggage. He felt like a man in a nightmare, carried away from his will.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

BY RITA.

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V. A DISCUSSION.

WHATEVER I might have wished or intended in avoiding Douglas Hay was now rendered impossible. He stayed on at Inverness. He called at Grannie's or the Camerons' daily. Everywhere he received warm welcome. His old faults and sins were conveniently forgotten now that he was rich and prosperous. I was almost tired of hearing how much he had improved. Even the Cameron girls sang his praises from morning till night.

He brought Huel Penryth to call at Craig Bank, and Grannie was delighted with him. He treated her with a grave and gentle courtesy, a chivalrous deference that was infinitely charming. I think the sweet-natured old Scottish lady was a revelation of character to him. He told me that he had never met any person like her—never known what a sense of "rest" the mere presence of one person could give to another—and day after day drifted by, and still they lingered on, and still the Laird remained away after he had unearthed the M'Kays, and was going here, there, and everywhere in their company. He had gained his point, and they were all coming to stay at Corriemoor; but first the girls wanted to visit Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and then come on to Inverness. Robert M'Kaye, his friend, was very desirous that the Laird should stay with them all the time, and if I did not object, and was content to remain

on at Craig Bank, he felt inclined to do so.

He seemed to think it would be much pleasanter for us all to proceed to Corriemoor together, and I heartily agreed with him.

I read this letter out to Grannie, and found she was only too pleased to keep me with her. Her health had very much improved. She was able to go out now on fine days, and Douglas Hay or his friend would be almost certain to come round and escort her. It gave me a strange pang sometimes to see her leaning on Douglas's stalwart arm, to watch the handsome head bent down to catch her lightest word, to hear the pleasant, ringing voice greet her with its manly welcome—the voice that now was always cold and formal to me.

It was right that it should be so. It was right that we should school ourselves to coldness and formality. But the effort was not easy, and the result was not always pleasant. From that hour when he had sat with me in the little fire-lit drawing-room his manner had entirely changed. It was composed, calm, polite as a stranger's might have been—nothing more. Now and then if a chance glance met mine it was instantly withdrawn. We never exchanged words, save the merest formalities; never were alone for an instant; never, by word, or look, or tone, gave that hint of "Do you remember!" which, of all love's snares, is the hardest to avoid.

A great coldness, and yet a strange content, came over me. I told myself that the sting of the past had been withdrawn, that we had both learnt our lesson, and were satisfied with the learning. Soon enough our ways would part, our mode of

life becomes that thing of duty and obligation which I had so long known.

I saw a great deal of Huel Penryth. Sometimes I wondered whether Douglas had ever confided any portion of the by-gone love-story to his friend, for it seemed to me often that he was criticising and observing me so keenly.

There was a strange fascination about his conversation—I had never met with a mind so widely cultivated, so keenly analytical, so absolutely indifferent to all weakness of human affection or sympathy.

There are natures here and there which are capable of standing alone, of supplying companionship and interest to themselves, and certainly Huel Penryth possessed such a nature.

I could not marvel at the change in Douglas Hay after two years of companionship and association with this strange being, and that, too, at a time when his own mind and nature must have been most capable of being influenced by strong will and stern judgement. It was with no small surprise that I learnt from Huel Penryth that he had accepted the Laird's invitation to Corriemoor, and had induced Douglas to do the same.

"Hay did not wish to go there; but I have a keen desire to see these famous Lochs that Campbell is always boasting of," he said. "I have travelled far and wide in my time, and I always make a point of seeing as much as there is to be seen in any country. Having come to Scotland, it is scarcely likely that I should leave half of it unexplored. This was a rare chance," he added. "I felt quite grateful when your husband proposed it."

"You will find Corriemoor fearfully dull," I said; "I know of no place that conveys the idea of 'stagnation' so absolutely. Every one is the same at the year's end as they were at the beginning. Everything is done as their fathers, and grandfathers, and great-grandfathers did it. An independent opinion shocks the people. The slightest variation in habit savours of 'boldness' and unorthodoxy. They nearly drove me wild at first with their narrowness and exclusiveness, and sublime self-satisfaction. But I am used to it now."

"That statement," he said, gently, "is not quite true. You could never get used to such a life. It is entirely antagonistic to every feeling and every thought. But you accept it because you cannot help

yourself, and in time you will cease to rebel, and grow calm and even-minded—and, perhaps, content. Then you will be happier."

"That word—always that word," I exclaimed, impatiently; "has it any meaning beyond the mere selfishness of personal enjoyment, or the suitability of one's immediate surroundings?"

He flashed a keen and searching glance at me.

"Have you learnt to ask yourself that?" he said. "I would answer you as I have answered myself. Man seeks to be 'happy' because he is so constituted that pain—physical or mental—is distressing to his organisation. But beyond pure animal enjoyment, that is to say a combination of perfect health, utter indifference to all that ministers not to sense and feeling, and the mere delight in existence, there is no meaning to the word. Shall I tell you why? Because spiritual or mental happiness cannot proceed from itself. It needs participation and sympathy. Here and there a mutual hand-clasp strengthens, a mutual companionship cheers, the delicate tendrils of sympathy and love are clasped, and held by strong and tender support. The momentary ecstasy of such discovery turns all that is highest, purest, noblest in our being to one song of delight. We have found happiness at last. It is secure—it is perfect. The world is bathed in sunshine, the golden lyre of Nature tuned to our own key of joy. For a little space we grasp our dream, believing it 'reality.' But it is never that. Never for a single moment. When it ceases to be a dream, our pleasure in it is gone. Awakening and disillusion are one and the same thing."

"You make life a very dreary thing," I said. "Does not friendship, or kindred, or love—each and all of these do something to lighten its darkness, and smooth its rough paths?"

"Here and there, I grant you, one may meet true friendship, or genuine family affection. Love—that golden idyl of youth, that vision of beauty and delight, we for ever try to seize—love, as we picture and dream of it, is rarely, if ever, found. In its simpler form it may abide, and then, surrounding itself with other interests and affections, prove as satisfactory as most human passions; but love itself, the ethereal, the divine, stealing from some fairyland of romance, making sunshine in the darkness, and

gladness in the day, bringing rapture with a touch, a look of mutual comprehension, a thought shared, a word whispered—love like this has but brief abiding-place. Even as we gain we lose it."

I listened silently. The truth of those words came home to me bitterly, and with a new sense of pain, because they seemed to sound like an echo of all I had dreamt, cherished, lost.

His voice broke on my ear again.

"You have suffered, you have learnt the frailty of human sympathy, and the weakness of human faith. You will be the sadder for your lesson, but the wiser because you learnt it in youth. Put dreams aside; yield yourself to the tyranny of every-day life; bury in its depths the object which has troubled its surface. In time you will learn content; human passions, desires, sentiments will cease to trouble you; you will ask no longer then to be 'happy'; you will have gained a height of serene content that will prove infinitely more satisfactory than any feeling dependent on another, and scored and branded by the fierce scars of human passions."

I sighed involuntarily.

"Ah! if the attainment of such content were easy, or time lagged less upon the road."

"Some day," he answered, "it will seem so cruelly short a journey."

I shook my head.

"Perhaps if one had interest, ambition, occupation. I envy men."

"Believe me, you need not. We suffer quite as keenly as you, even if more peremptory needs force us to put aside our remembering hours and sad memories to some quiet or dark interval in the hurried march of life. We seize upon distraction and occupation with avidity. You think us heartless. So we misjudge and envy one another. Nature cannot judge nature, nor soul soul. The surface histories we read must be widely different from the real story beneath. Who can guess the contents of the volume from its binding, or read the grief of man behind his smile? The martyr's life is not a thing of a past century: it is the pulse of unspoken and unguessed sorrow beating always, always in the breast of humanity. So shall it beat, so shall its passionate pain throb, unstill, unknown, unpitied, till time and life for us have ceased to be!"

The strange melancholy sweetness of his voice touched me almost to tears. In-

stinctively I guessed that he had drawn an exaggerated picture. His was one of those lives suffering silently, sorrowing dumbly the smart and sting of hidden pain for ever rankling in the tortured heart.

I wondered what had brought to his this burden of unshared grief, what loss what faithlessness, what dream long dead and broken.

He looked at me suddenly. Perhaps he saw the tears wet on my lashes and read the sympathy in my face. His own softened and grew almost gentle. He took my hand with a sudden nervous pressure.

"You understand me," he said. "Think you are one of the few women who could give sympathy without question. But the day for that is over. I have learnt to stand alone."

CHAPTER VI. SPECULATIONS.

"Do you think the world is coming to an end?" ejaculated Bella, in wonder looking up from a letter I had just handed to her. "Why, the Laird seems fairly daft about these folk. What a set-out a Corriemoor! The old lady will be thinking her good, steady boy has taken leave of his senses!"

I laughed as I took back the letter which had arrived by the morning's post.

"It certainly will be a change, and a very great one," I said.

"Well, I'm glad enough for your sake," said my cousin, "you look quite bright and cheery again. It's no longer 'Oh, anything will do for Corriemoor.' I'm thinking that I'll have to look out my brows, and the Leddy o' Cockpen will e'en have to don her silk gowns to preside at her ain board in style, instead of moping like a wee brown mouse in the wainscot."

"I wonder," I said, still smiling, "what Mrs. Campbell thinks of all this."

"She'll fancy that you and I have turned her laddie's head," laughed Bella, "whereas it is all those M'Kayses. Are you not curious to see them?"

"Yes, I think I am, if only for the revolution they seem to have created in the mind of our staid and solemn Laird. It is very pleasant to think of this yacht at our disposal. I have never been on one in my life; and, after hearing such endless rhapsodies on the scenery of the Lochs, I am more than curious to see them."

"I don't fancy you'll be disappointed," said Bella, "provided the weather keeps fair. I have heard a great deal about

Loch Fyne, and Loch Linnhe, and the scenery of the Western Highlands; the sunsets and sunrises over the mountains, and the strange, lonely islands, where only the wild-fowl seem to live. The men will be for shooting, of course, and we women folk must do what we can for amusement. If the M'Kays are pleasant, I make no doubt we shall enjoy ourselves."

"I think there is little doubt of that," I said.

"You'll mind and not be flirting with Douglas Hay again," said Bella, with sudden seriousness. "Mr. Penryth is safe enough, but it was not the wisest thing in the world for the Laird to ask Douglas."

"He could not surely have asked his friend without including him in the invitation," I said, coldly; "and you need be under no apprehension of my 'flirting,' as you call it. You appear to forget that I am the only married woman of the party, and have to chaperone three eligible damsels. Besides, Douglas Hay and I are little more than strangers now. You can see for yourself how much he is altered."

"That is true," said my cousin, gravely; "but it is an alteration, I fancy, for which you have to answer, that is why I warn you. If he had quite forgotten, and if life were pleasant to him now, he would not look so cold and grave, or avoid you in such a very marked manner. However, one comfort is that you are cured, and not likely to encourage him in any of his old follies."

I glanced quickly at her.

"You are very observant," I said. "Since your mind is at rest respecting Douglas and myself, tell me what you think of Huel Penryth?"

A sudden gravity stole over the bright, winsome face.

"If I told you," she said, "you would laugh at me as fanciful."

"Why should I? He is a man about whom one cannot help wondering and speculating. He excites one's interest from the moment he speaks. Even the Laird did not escape."

"I know that well. What I found out about him was partly from a chance word he let fall, and partly from some conversation I had with Douglas Hay. They stayed a night at Edinburgh on their way here. Douglas told me that, and I said, 'Your old friend Mrs. Dunleith is there; she has quite forsaken Inverness.'"

"'I know,' he said, quickly. 'I went to call on her.'"

The old sharp, jealous pang at my heart at the mere mention of that name. Bella's eyes met mine. I wondered whether she read any change in my face.

"He did not lose much time," I said, coldly.

"No," she said; "but if you remember it was Mrs. Dunleith who sent him out to Canada and furnished him with introductions which, by the way, he never used. Did you never think it strange, Athole, that neither his father nor Mrs. Dunleith ever told us about his being shipwrecked; They both knew the name of his vessel, though we never heard it."

"How could they suppose it would interest or concern us?"

"Well," she said, indignantly, "Douglas Hay was our friend long before Mrs. Dunleith ever saw him!"

"True," I answered, indifferently; "but, my dear, your conversation is what the old Irishwoman called 'a thrife dis-coorsive.' What has all this to do with Huel Penryth?"

"I am coming to that," she said, impressively. "I am sure, Athole, that he knows something about Mrs. Dunleith, and something not quite—to her credit."

"I should think a great many men might know that," I answered, coldly.

"No doubt," persisted Bella; "but there is some secret, some mystery in her life, and I'm certain Huel Penryth knows it. I can't tell you why I feel this so strongly; but if by any chance her name ever crops up in conversation, you think of what I've told you, and—watch his face."

"I will," I said, not without some wonder at her assurance.

I remembered his strange words, his indifference to human affection, his cynicism with regard to women; and my own conviction that some deep and still unhealed wound dealt him in the past was answerable for all.

Strange if Mrs. Dunleith had been the woman who had wronged him! What could there be about her to charm or win two men so totally opposite in mind and character as Douglas Hay and Huel Penryth? She was not very beautiful, nor very brilliant, nor very alluring; yet she had held so strange a power, that for sake of it one man declared his life had been wrecked; for the sake of it another had been false to all truth, and honour, and chivalry.

I sighed heavily.

"I cannot understand," I said, "why bad women seem to have so much more power than good ones. Look at the things men do, and have done, for them ever since the world had a history to chronicle. The women who have had the greatest charm, and subjugated the most hearts, have always been of the 'siren' and seductive type—Helen, Cleopatra, Phryne, Faustine, S. miramis, the Borgia, Mary of Scotland, Catherine of Russia, the Maintenon, the Pompadour, and ever so many more—but none of them were good, or faithful, or pure women; if they had been they would have had no histories; they could only have loved loyally, and suffered silently."

"Perhaps they would have been happier for that," said Bella. "I often think it must be a great misfortune to be very beautiful. You are always beset by admiration and flattery, you have infinitely more temptation than plain, or merely pretty women. Your own sex are always spiteful and jealous—men won't be your friends, or can't. On the whole, beauty is not so enviable."

"I wonder," I said, somewhat irrelevantly, "in what Mrs. Dunleith's power of charming consists?"

"Well, she would not be likely to waste it on us," laughed Bella; "I confess I am curious about her past. I had always a doubt of her being quite what she represented herself. Adventuresses are not always bold, and obtrusive, and dashing, you know, and the quiet, subtle ones are infinitely more dangerous."

"Douglas was such a boy," I muttered, ill-advisedly, my thoughts drifting back to that time when this woman had held the power to make me so terribly unhappy; "she might have left him alone."

Bella looked quickly up at me.

"Some women," she said, "seem to have a predilection for boys. Perhaps they are safer, or less exacting than those of riper years."

"I wonder if she really was a widow," I persisted.

"Why, my dear child," laughed Bella, "you are positively growing uncharitable. What on earth can it matter to us now who or what she was?"

"Nothing, of course," I said, stupidly; "only it would be some satisfaction to know."

"She is too clever for that," said Bella, gravely; "don't trouble your dear little head about her, coz. She can't spoil our

yachting trip, at all events, and that's all we have to think of at present."

"It seems almost too good to be true," I answered, rising at last, and gathering up my letters. "Oh, Bella, I wish we were starting to-morrow."

She laughed.

"All in good time, dearie. I think it's pretty certain to come off, and that reminds me I must get a serge dress. You might come out with me now, and we'll go to Miss McPherson's and choose one. What about yourself?"

"I shall have one also; navy-blue serge and white braid, I think. Let us have both alike, Bella."

"With all my heart," she agreed.

So we told Grannie we were bound for the dressmaker's, and then I dressed, and we marched sedately down to the High Street—thoughts and tongues still occupied with the all-engrossing topic of the yachting trip.

MARY MUSGRAVE—THIEF.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"NINE carats of it's a blessed one."

"Scale 'im, and ye'll find he's a half better. Christmas puddings! What a bit o' glass! Clear es a bottle o' gin, an' flawless es the Pope! Tommy Dartmoor, ye're in luck, s'welp me never ef ye ain't, an' that's a brilliant yer can show the polis and not get time fer."

Tommy Dartmoor, who owed his surname to a Crown establishment, within the restraining walls of which he had once enjoyed a temporary residence, growled out a recommendation to "stow that"; and then added: "Boys, we'll wet this. Trek to Werstein's."

Forthwith a crowd of dirty, tanned diggers turned their heads in the direction of Gustav Werstein's American Bar, and walked towards it as briskly as the heat and their weariness would admit of. The Israelite saw them coming, straightened himself out of the half-doze in which he had passed the baking afternoon, stopped down the Boer tobacco in the porcelain bowl of his long-stemmed pipe with stumpy forefinger, and, twisting a cork off his cork-screw, stood in readiness.

"Name yer pizons, boys, an' get outside 'em, wishin' all good luck to R'yal Straight. R'yal Straight bein' the name o' this yer stone given by Thomas D. Hesquire, original disciverer, and present perpriator."

The orders were given—Bass at five shillings a bottle; small champagne—née gooseberry—at five pounds; Cape smoke at two shillings per two fingers—and at a given signal there was an inarticulate roar from dusty throats, an inversion of tumblers over thirsty mouths, and a second inversion over the ground to show that all the liquid contents had disappeared.

Satan, the one cat, and only domestic pet of the camp, saw that there was a general treat going on, and bustling up for his drink, took a can of condensed milk at six shillings. Other diggers came trooping in as the news spread; and Tommy Dartmoor, who was rapidly becoming mellow, for he drank half a tumbler of raw whisky with every one who nodded to him, stood them refreshments galore; whilst the greasy Jew began to see visions of his adopted fatherland in the near distance.

Without, the mining camp was deserted.

It was just upon sundown, and the bloated yellow disc was balancing on the horizon. The Scholar—an ex-Christ-Church man who had driven tandem to the dogs in his salad days, and had then had other troubles which had driven him out of England—the Scholar pictured it as “for all the world like a big hot frying-pan.” But that was one day when he had a touch of fever, and was feeling sentimental; and in general he agreed with the other miners in describing it as an infernal nuisance. The once-green veldt was burnt and dusty; the scattered mounds of blue clay were desiccated to the highest degree; the corrugated iron roofs of the miners’ shanties were so hot that the atmosphere beneath them was more fit to bake bread in than to pass through human lungs; and the inhabitants of this delectable spot—Kaffirs and whites alike—were unanimous in agreeing that it was just the day for a drink.

Tommy, as we have seen, was standing unlimited treat; but although Tommy was drunk, he was not drunk enough to waste liquor on a Kaffir. He might drink himself insensible, he might buy liquor merely to pour it on to the thirsty earth—he had, as a point of fact, done both more than once—but it never could be said that Mr. Thomas Dartmoor had wasted the heaven-sent liquids dispensed by the hands of Herr Gustav Werstein on a mere heathen. He certainly might not be a good man—he did not set up as such—but he was far too much of a Christian to commit that enormity.

So the Kaffirs, except those who had supplies of their own, kept sober and peaceful, whilst the higher order of the human race at Big Stone Hole, after the manner of their kind, began to squabble. It was natural for them to do so, perhaps, for the weather was hot, and the liquors, for the most part, more so; and under these circumstances men do not always cast about them long for a *casus belli*. One or two minor brawls opened the ball, and Herr Gustav, scenting battle in the air, drew from a locker a card, which he balanced against the bottles on a shelf above his head. It read thus:

“GENTS IS REKESTED TO SHOOT
CLEAR OF THE BARR-KEP.

BROKIN GLAS MAY BE PADE FOR
AT COST PRISE,”

and had been written for the German by a gentleman who had had some experience in Forty Rod Gulch, Sierra Nevada. The action elicited a contemptuous laugh from one or two of the new hands, but the oldsters began shifting sundry articles which depended from their belts into positions from which they might be handled at the shortest notice; and the black cat, more wise than any of them, having drunk his fill, stalked solemnly out into the security of the darkness.

The sun went down—went out with a click, some one declared—and, as no twilight interposed between daylight and darkness in the country which Big Stone Hole ornamented, Herr Gustav lit his two paraffine lamps. Neither boasted of more than a one-inch wick, and as their glasses were extremely smoky, the illumination was not brilliant; but it sufficed to show the flushed, angry faces of a couple of men standing in the centre of the room, with all the others clustered round, watching eagerly. One was the Scholar. The other was a burly giant, whose missing left little finger caused him to be nicknamed the Cripple. About what they had originally fallen out was not clear to any one, to themselves least of all. As the case stood when the second lamp was lit, Scholar had called Cripple a something or other liar, and Cripple, who was not inventive, had retorted by stigmatising Scholar as another. Further recriminations followed, and their pistols were drawn; but as the audience had a strong objection to indiscriminate shooting, by which it was not likely to benefit, the ballingerents were seized. No one was unimportantlike

enough to wish to stop the fight, and Joekey Bill, giving voice to the general wish of the meeting, proposed that the gents be fixed up agin a couple o' posts outside, where they might let daylight into one another without lead-poisoning casual spectators.

The motion was acted on, and after rectifying a slight omission on the Cripple's part—he had forgotten to put caps on the nipples of his revolver—the pair of them were sat upon upturned barrels, some ten yards apart, each with a lamp at his feet, and told to begin when they saw fit to do so. The swarthy, bearded diggers grouped themselves on either side, and the cat, emerging from his retreat, scrambled on to the shoulder of one of them, fully as curious as the rest to "see the shootin'." It was a weird sight, take it all round—dust, scorched grass, empty tins, rude hovels, piles of débris, African moonlight—yet except, perhaps, in the eyes of the newest comers, there was nothing strange in it. The others were too wrapped up in what was going to take place to see anything quaint in their every-day surroundings. There was no theatre in the camp. The little impromptu drama riveted all attention.

But before the duel commenced, a galloping horse, which had approached over the grassy veldt unnoticed during the little excitement, drew up with a crash between the two combatants, and its rider, raising his hand to command attention, cried :

"Boys, there's a white woman comin'!"

"A white woman!" chorused thirty voices in various tones of disbelief. "What, here! White woman comin' here, Dan!"

And then some one enquired if she was a Boer.

"Boer—no," replied Dan; "English—English as I am; leastways Englisher, bein' Amurrican born myself. Overtook her et Hottentot Drift. Thort I'd spur on an' tell yer. We'd do wi' a clean-up, some on us."

Dan spoke indistinctly, as a bullet had disarranged some of his teeth a short while since; but his words had a wonderful effect.

Each man began instinctively to tidy himself. The would-be duellists, forgetting their recent quarrel, stuck the revolvers in their belts, and followed the general example. The Cripple hid him to the store, and after breaking down the door, abstracted the only blacking-brush in the camp—putting down a sovereign on the

counter in exchange for it—and set to polishing his high boots as if a fortune were dependant on their brightness. The Scholar bought Herr Gustav's white shirt for a fiver, threatening to murder its owner if he did not render it up. And Partridge, a good man from Norfolk, with a regrettable weakness for shooting other people's game, induced a friend to denude him of his flowing locks by means of a clasp-knife and a hunk of wood, as no scissors were procurable.

The wardrobes of Big Stone Hole were stocked more with a view to strict utility than variety or ornamentation, and the slender resources of the store utterly gave out under the sudden strain that was put upon them. In every direction grimy, unkempt men might be seen attempting to beautify themselves. Here was one enduring agonies from a razor which would scarcely whittle a stick; here another recalling the feel of a cake of soap; there a great fellow pulling faces as he struggled to get the teeth of a comb into his shock of hair; there another brushing the clay from his moleskin trousers with a tuft of stiff grass.

It seemed to these men ages since they had last seen a woman in the flesh—Kaffir women don't count; they are not women: merely Kaffirs—and, with the natural instinct of males of every species, they set about pluming their feathers.

These operations, though speedy as might be, were necessarily prolonged, for most of the men required several buckets of water over the head before they felt fit for such unaccustomed exercises; and they were scarcely finished, before the creaking of wheels, and the cries of the vooloper as he urged his oxen, announced that the wagon was within earshot. Up it came, the great tilt gleaming white in the moonlight, and every eye was fixed expectantly on the dark chasm within. The driver, puffed up with his own importance, cracked his long whip, and deigned not to notice the men whom he usually greeted with a friendly hail; and the Hottentot boy ahead, imitating his master, vouchsafed no explanation. With more deathly slowness than usual did the lumbering vehicle crawl along until the tired cattle pulled up before the door of the American Bar. Then there was a rush, and a bit of a scuffle for the honour of handing the woman out. The Cripple was the fortunate man, and, after assisting her to the ground, waved his tattered hat towards the gleaming open

doorway. But did not speak. Words were beyond him. Indeed, the diggers, who were none of them particularly remarkable for taciturnity as a general thing, seemed with one exception to be stricken dumb. But the Scholar proved himself equal to the occasion, and with courtly phrase bade the new-comer welcome to the camp. He had always been a popular man amongst women in his palmier days, though openly holding rather a poor opinion of them; and as the one before him now was neat of speech and comely of form, he was not at all averse to enjoying her society and conversation.

"I should be much obliged if you would direct me to an hotel," she said, after taking a look round the cheap gaudiness of the saloon.

"I'm sorry to say that we have no hotel here as yet, Miss—er—!"

"Musgrave. Miss Mary Musgrave"—with a little bow. "But you alarm me. I heard that a German had started an hotel here."

"No, there is nothing but this. That"—pointing to Herr Gustav, who was regarding the new-comer with an evil eye—"that is the German."

Miss Musgrave appeared distressed.

"Then where can I go?" she asked. "Are there any lodgings to be had?"

"The lady may have my place," chorussed three eager voices, and every man in the room repeated the offer.

She thanked them with a pretty smile and one comprehensive bow, and looked up at the Scholar for help.

"I would offer you my hut if it were not such a wretched one. But, as it is, I should advise you to take this man's"—and he pointed to Tommy Dartmoor.

"Why, mine's twenty carats better than his'n," exclaimed the Cripple.

"And mine better'n either," growled Dan.

"Mine's the best of the lot."

"No it isn't, mine is," yelled others, till there was a general roar, which caused Miss Musgrave to look frightened and shrink nearer to the Scholar, and that gentleman to raise his hand for silence.

"Look here," said he: "we'll pick out the twelve best, and their owners can cut with one another from a pack of cards."

After some discussion, twelve were settled upon; but the number was immediately raised to thirteen to prevent Jockey Bill disgracing the camp by shooting before a lady. A pack of cards was placed on the

bar, and each man chose one, holding his selection face downwards till all were ready. Then the Scholar said "Turn," and there were exhibited five aces, two kings, a queen, three knaves, and two smaller cards. This was awkward, to say the least of it, and, whilst sarcastic laughter rippled amongst the spectators, there was an instinctive movement of right hands towards the back of the belt on the part of each of the thirteen.

But the Scholar's voice, full of remonstrance, said, "Boys, you're being looked at," and there was a regretful sigh or two, but no bloodshed.

Miss Musgrave gazed enquiringly from one to the other, and the Scholar, laying his hand confidentially on her arm, whispered something in her ear. She smiled, whispered back, and was answered; and then, stripping off a pair of well-fitting fawn gloves, she took the cards in a pretty little white hand, and dealt out one to each of the competitors with charming clumsiness.

"Ain't touched a keard afore, bless her," whispered Euchre Buck, giving his neighbour Dan a nudge in the ribs to call attention to this wonderful piece of girlish innocence. "Square a deal as George Washington mought ha' made." Then, as the greasy paste-boards were turned up, and his neighbour was handed the ace of clubs, he raised his voice and yelled out: "Bully for you, Dan! Cut away an' clar yer cabin out."

Away scampered Dan out into the darkness, with the rest of the crew at his heels. Their home-comforts were very small, poor fellows; but each gave of his best, though the gifts were often incongruous enough. In half an hour the cabin was fitted out with a small cracked looking-glass, two combs, an old hair-brush—still wet from the wash—a pail, a frying-pan, three kettles, two three-legged stools, and so many blankets that some were requisitioned to carpet the floor. The whole crowd accompanied Miss Musgrave to her door, and gave her a cheer by way of good-night. She bowed to them, smiling her thanks, and looking, as they thought, entrancingly lovely as she stood there, with the pale moonbeams falling fall on her.

Then she turned to go in; but as Euchre Buck stepped forward with an admonishing cough, she waited, and looked round at him.

"Miss," said he, holding out a big revolver in his hard fist, "you take this yer

gun, an' ef any one whistles, or otherwise disturbs you, let a hole into him straight away, an' we'll see him buried decent."

But Miss Musgrave courteously, and with profuse thanks, refused the offer, and saying that she had perfect confidence in all who were around her, gave Euchre Buck a bewitching smile, went inside, and closed the door after her.

Then the diggers returned to Gustav Werstein's American Bar, and discussed the new arrival.

"I knows Noomarket, an' Hascot, an' Hepsom, an' all the places where swells goes in England," said Jockey Bill, enthusiastically; "but never one come there as pretty as she, stop my licence if ther' did."

"Grand eyes, hain't she?" said Tommy Dartmoor. "Regular fust water uns. Here's to 'em."

"And—a—hoof! Seed it peep below her gownd. S'welp me ef it wer'es big es my bacca box!"

"An' 'er close, gentlemen! Made to measure, every thread on 'em, I allow."

"She's a lady, boys," exclaimed he who had offered to see after a funeral, "a reg'lar slap-up, high-toned, blow-ye-eyes-don't-touch-me lady; an' as she see fit to do the civil to this fellar"—striking himself on the chest—"he's just going to drop his professional name, an' arak yer to call him Mister Samuel K. Gregson, Esquire. Play on that."

"Lady be hanged," began a more refined voice than any that had yet spoken. "Not much! I tell you—Hullo!"

The Scholar stopped suddenly, and swung his fist round behind him, but a stern voice said:

"Throw up yer hands, or ye'll never get yer boots off again. We got the drop on yer this time."

The ex-Christ Church man saw four black, powder-grimed tubes levelled at him, and, after hesitating a moment, clasped his hands behind his head, and looked at his adversaries unflinchingly.

"What next?" he demanded.

"Down on yer knees an' swaller that."

"I'll be hanged if I kneel to any man."

"Shot, Scholar; not hanged, shot," suggested Euchre Buck, blandly.

"Shoot away," returned the other, indifferently. "I'm about sick of this place already, and as a woman sent me here, a woman may as well send me on. Steady your muzzle, Tommy. Drinking's making your hand shake."

There was a dead silence for a minute or so, each expecting one of the others to fire, and each being unwilling, through admiration of the Scholar's pluck, to pull trigger himself. Then Euchre Buck, without lowering his weapon, asked:

"Will yer take it back ef we let yer stand?"

The Scholar appeared to consider how far this concession was damaging to his dignity, and then saying: "Oh, if you are anxious about it, I'll admit that I may have been mistaken," stuffed his hands into his pockets and walked out.

Next morning the inhabitants of Big Stone Hole were startled by reading this announcement outside the cabin, which Dan had resigned to Miss Musgrave:

SINGING AND MUSIC TAUGHT.

LITERARY WORK DONE.

It was printed on a card, which was affixed to the door by means of a drawing-pin, and from within came the sound of a contralto voice singing to a guitar accompaniment. One by one the male residents of Big Stone Hole drew near to that iron-roofed hut and stopped to listen; but after commenting on the innovation in gleeful whispers—for guitar had never twanged in that part of Africa before—they moved on to their work. No consideration could cause them to neglect that. They might fritter away the dull, rough gems when they had found them; but the lust of handling diamonds once was the strongest passion they knew. And so the day's toil was not curtailed; but at the conclusion Miss Musgrave had an application for instruction in music from every man in the camp, with one exception. This one defaulter was Euchre Buck. He owned to having no ear for music—thereby exhibiting more honesty than many of the others—and confessed to knowing only two tunes, one of which was "Hail, Columbia," and the other—wasn't; and so he said he wanted some "literary work done." He proposed to Miss Musgrave that she should write a history of his life at half-a-guinea a page, thereby—'cute Yankee that he was—thinking to appropriate the whole of her time.

But embarrassed by all these calls upon her, and obviously unable to satisfy each of them, Miss Musgrave turned for help to the Scholar, whom she appeared to regard as her special adviser; and he promising a solution of the difficulty in half an hour,

draw off the whole crowd to the American Bar, where the question was threshed out in all its points.

It was clearly evident that Miss Musgrave could not surrender to each individual the whole of her evening, even if any one had been willing to let his neighbour monopolise it, which no one was, and therefore it was necessary to formulate some scheme by which the outcome of her talents might be distributed over a larger area. But what the scheme should be was not settled all in a minute. One man wanted to hear her sing, another to hear her talk, another was willing to give five pounds an hour for the privilege of talking to her. After a lengthened discussion, which was excited throughout, and at times verged on the warlike, it was decided to effect a compromise—subject of course to Miss Musgrave's inclinations—and a deputation was sent to learn her views on the subject.

There was no assembly-room in the place, excepting Werstein's saloon—which, of course, was not available for such a purpose—and so it was proposed to her, with much humility, that she should take up her position in the evenings on a chair outside her hut, and there discourse such vocal and instrumental music as she saw fit, interlarding the same with friendly conversation. What was she to talk about? Anything—absolutely anything. They didn't mind what it was, so long as they heard her voice. Five shillings, the committee had decided, was to be paid by every man who came within ear-shot. And any one who wanted a free list was requested to argue the matter out with Euchre Buck.

This call upon her powers seemed to take Miss Musgrave aback.

"I have never sung in public," she pleaded, rather nervously. "Indeed, my voice is not good enough for it; really it isn't. Only I thought I could teach a little, perhaps, and that is why I came here. You see, mother is an invalid, and we were so very poor, that——"

"Miss," broke in Jockey Bill, "call it ten bob a 'ead, and just 'um to us."

"Oh no, Mr. William, it was not the money that I thought about; indeed, five shillings would be far too much. But if you think that I should be able to amuse you at all, I would do my very best—believe me I would."

"Miss," growled Dan, with a clumsy endeavour to chase away her diffidence,

"all we asks is fer you to sit near us fer a spell. Ef you sings or plays, we'd be proud; ef you just looks an' talks, we'd be pleased."

So in the end Miss Musgrave yielded to the wishes of the community, and the nightly conclave in the American Bar became so much a thing of the past that Gustav Werstein was heard to threaten another emigration. The songs were to the diggers new, and yet not new. There was nothing of the music-hall type about them; they were nearly all old-fashioned ditties. She sang to them of "Barbara Allen," and "Sally in Our Alley"; she gave them "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," and called for a chorus; she sang the "Message," the "Arrow and the Song"; and she brought back memories of other days, when Africa was to them a mere geographical expression—of days when that something had not happened which had sent them away from home.

Sunday came, the fifth day after her arrival, and it differed from the usual Sabbath of Big Stone Hole. Sunday had been observed before by the biggest drinking bout of the week, and a summary settlement of the previous six days' disputes. Now, to the huge surprise of the Kaffirs, and to the still greater surprise of themselves, these diamond-diggers sang hymns at intervals during the day, and refrained from indulging in the orthodox carouse till after Miss Musgrave had retired for the night. It was a wonderful change.

During the next week a fall of earth took place in Tommy Dartmoor's claim. Two Kaffirs were killed; and when the proprietor himself was extricated from the débris of blue clay which held him down, he was found to have a broken arm, besides other serious injuries.

"Don't let on to her," he managed to gasp out to his rescuers, wishing to spare Miss Musgrave's nerves a shock.

But she saw the men bearing him to his hut, joined them, and insisted on being installed as sole nurse forthwith.

Twenty other men would willingly have broken an arm for such a reward; and the recklessness displayed during the next few days was something awful. But she saw that, too—little escaped those big blue eyes—and ascribing it to drink, gave a pretty strong lecture on the bibulous habits of Big Stone Hole, at her next concert.

There was an earnest meeting in the American Bar that night, at which the following motion was put and carried unanimously: "On and after this date, any drunken man is liable to be shot at sight, unless his friends can prove that he has dug over three carats of diamonds during the day." And then, like other reformers, they went on to more sweeping measures. "Only knife-fighting to take place in the camp. All disputes with pistols, unless of a very pressing nature, to be settled out of earshot of Dan's house." There were even some hints of appointing a closing time for the saloon. "It would make the place so much more like home." But the promoter eventually withdrew his suggestion, as it was justly felt that such a motion would interfere with the liberty of the subject too much. But a storm of cheers burst forth when it was proposed to transfer the diamond safe from Werstein's keeping to a corner of the new goddess's shrine.

Even Satan joined in the general adoration, and, more favoured than the rest, enjoyed at times a chaste salute from Miss Musgrave's ripe red lip.

Never, in so short a space of time, had a community been more changed for the better than was that of Big Stone Hole. Never had woman's humanising influence made itself more clearly felt. The azure cloud of blasphemy that hung over the workings and the rest of the camp was replaced again by the normal dust. The diggers took to washing themselves at least once a week, and at times even indulged in a clean shirt. Empty provision cans, "dead marines," and other débris were thrown to the backs of the huts, instead of being allowed to lie in unsightly heaps before the doors. Each man tried to beautify the inside of his shanty to the best of his means and ideas, for there was no knowing when the only "she" would take it into her pretty, capricious head to pay a call. In this latter line the Scholar had a decided pull. Education had taught him taste; necessity, handiness; and by aid of the two he transformed his rude dwelling into something approaching the rooms in which he used to dawdle away the happy hours, time ago. It was partly drawing-room, partly curiosity shop. The walls were stencilled with pigments made from coloured earths, and hung with prints in Oxford frames, with a few pieces of quaint delf, with African weapons and oddments; the floor was carpeted with

mats deftly woven from coloured reeds and grasses, on which luxurious easy-chairs and a veritable tea-table—whittled from local timber by a deft Bowie—stood in orthodox confusion. The bed seemed nothing more or less than a sofa; whilst all domestic implements were relegated to the comparative privacy of an extempore outhouse. Cups, saucers, spoons, et cæ omnia, appeared as if by magician's call; and one blazing afternoon the news flashed round the diamond pits that Miss Musgrave was "taking afternoon tea with the Scholar."

It acted as a death-blow to several hopes; for though she had as yet markedly returned the attentions of no one in particular, many had aspirations that she would do in time. Some of these blighted sighers contented themselves with tobacco and silence; but others did such wonders at the American Bar that the dejected Hebrew had visions of seeing the former thirst of the Big Stone Holeians reconstituted in all its droughty completeness. But when the Scholar saw the dismay his simple act had spread around him, he dispated it with a kindly laugh and a few reassuring words.

"Don't mind me, boys. I was only doing the civil in a purely Platonic manner. Miss Musgrave is nothing to me; nor am I anything to her. Heaven forbid! I'm too hard a bargain for any girl. If any one of you marries her, I'll act as his best man if he asks me to, and wish him every felicity without a thought of regret."

"Bully for the Scholar!" yelled the delighted crowd; and Miss Musgrave's smiles were more sought after than ever.

So things went on day after day, week after week, till Miss Musgrave became little short of an autocratic Empress. Yet she was so gentle and modest, looked so shocked when an oath slipped out—as it would do occasionally, even with the best intentioned—that it was as goddess, rather than Queen, that they adored her. But still she showed no signs of taking unto herself a consort; she kept all men at a certain distance, and those who felt intimate enough to address her as "Miss Mary" accounted themselves uncommonly fortunate. Thus the little machine of state worked perfectly harmoniously, and Big Stone Hole was as steady and prosperous a settlement as need be.

Had these diggers refreshed their minds by looking back for historical parallels, they might have been prepared in some

degree for Miss Musgrave's exit from amongst them; but as none of them indulged in such retrospections, the manner of it took the camp somewhat by surprise.

It was first discovered in this wise. Work was over for the day. The Kaffirs had been searched, and had returned to their kraal. Pipes were being lit after the evening meal, and a picturesque assembly was grouping itself in an expectant semicircle on the sun-baked turf in front of Miss Musgrave's dwelling. She was usually outside to welcome the first-comers, and her absence naturally formed the staple topic of conversation. Digger after digger arrived, threw himself down, and joined in the general wonderment as to why Miss Mary wasn't there; and at last some one hazarded a suggestion that she "must be asleep." There was a general epidemic of noisy coughing for a full minute, and then silence for another; but no sound from within the hut.

"Perhaps she's ill," was the next surmise.

After the etiquette to be followed had been strictly discussed, and a rigid course of procedure set down, the Scholar got up and knocked at the door. He received no answer, and so knocked again—knocked several times, in fact, and then rattled the handle vigorously; but without result.

"Better open it," said a voice.

And he did so; and after looking inside, announced:

"She's not there."

At this moment Dan came up.

"My ole mar's gone," he said; "an' she ain't stampeded, neither, but was stole. Tote-ropes been untied, an' saddle an' bridle took as well."

There was uncomfortable silence, which the Scholar broke by a low, long-drawn whistle.

"Boys," said he, "let's look inside the safe."

The three men who held the keys brought them up, the bolts were shot, and the massive door swung back. There was every man's little sack with his name on it; but somehow or other the sacks looked limper than of yore. Each one was eagerly clutched and examined, and many a groan, and not a few curses, went up on the still night air as it was found that every sack save Dan's had been relieved of the more valuable part of its contents.

So much heart-breaking labour under the burning sun thrown away for nothing;

the dreary work to commence afresh, almost from the beginning! Had the thief been any ordinary one, the denunciation would have been unbounded; but no one lifted his tongue very loudly against Mary Musgrave. Yet mounted men were despatched on the three trails to bring back the booty if possible, and the rest moved dejectedly towards their old club. The greasy Jew did not attempt to conceal his exultation. He served his customers with his wicked old face glowing with smiles, and when a moment's breathing time came, he observed:

"We all 'az our leetle surprizes in dis wairld, an' I most confais I am asdonished myself to lairn dat Mess Mosgrave is a thief——" But here a crashing amongst the glassware announced that Tommy Dartmoor had begun shooting with his left hand, and Herr Gustav spluttered out from behind the fingers he held before his face, "Ach! Gott, I say nozzing more!"

There was no heavy drinking that night, nor, even more strange to relate, was there much noisy discussion. Some of the men were stunned by their loss, and others, who would have waxed garrulous and abusive, were stayed by the warning looks of Tommy Dartmoor and other partisans. No one denied the theft; but all admitted that it might have been more thorough. Those few precious pebbles at the bottom of the sacks, and Dan's untouched hoard, lingered gratefully in their memories.

The horsemen returned unsuccessful. Mary Musgrave had disappeared without leaving the slightest trace; and work went on as usual. I suppose I shall be expected to say that these diggers went utterly to the bad; but as they did nothing of the sort, I shall not perjure myself. True, when their self-made idol disappeared, taking with her many of the valuables from her shrine, they learnt that there was more than the usual modicum of clay in her composition; but for all that, the ground which had been shone on by the lustre of her presence had not been lighted in vain. One or two relapsed into their old ruffianly habits; but the majority of the denizens of Big Stone Hole remained in more or less the same moral condition in which Miss Musgrave left them.

When, in after years, Jockey Bill—who had set up a public-house in England on his savings—saw that redoubtable woman drive past his door in a carriage and pair, and mentioned the fact to the Scholar—who had succeeded to the paternal

acres—when he came in for a glass of beer and a chat over old times, the pair of them decided not to hand her over to justice, as she had done them much more good than harm. But, on the other hand, they were firmly agreed not to cultivate her acquaintance further.

THE OLD MASTERS AND OTHERS.

THE annual winter exhibition at Burlington House, as the century goes on, must sure, ere long, exhaust the supply of Old Masters, rich as our private collections are in such pictures. It will soon be a question of serving them as country parsons are said to deal with their stock of sermons, namely, to turn the heap and begin again. Not that the general public who go to picture exhibitions will regret much the falling off in Old Masters, if they get plenty of our own English school, in which the subjects as well as the artists are of interest and of our acquaintance, as it were.

"Oh, what a sweet, lovely picture, James!" cries an enthusiastic young woman to her sweetheart, lingering over a David Cox, in the water-colour room the other day. James turns prosaically to his catalogue.

"'Vale of Culwid,' Polly. I never was there, and can't give an opinion."

And that is the way with most of us; we like to have landscapes we have seen, or may come to see, although we shall never see them as the artist did; and portraits of people we know something about.

In this spirit we fall at once upon a Reynolds. It is little Master Bunbury, in a crimson coat, with his mouth open, and who will wear a red coat by-and-by, and be just such a captain in lace as any of the rest. But the boy interests because of his mother, Catherine Horneck, in her maiden state, or "Little Comedy," as she was called by poor Oliver Goldsmith, who owed to her and her sister Mary, the "Jessamy Brid-," the pleasantest hours of his life. And it is just before the beginning of the year in which Master B. was born, that Mrs. Bunbury writes from Suffolk to the "doctor" a rhymed letter, laughingly inviting him "to open our ball the first day in the year." And he is to have an evening at loo, also, to sit between the two sisters as in the old times, and be guided and corrected in his play. It is the old-fashioned five-card loo,

such as used to be played in the old châteaux of Brittany, under the name of *Mistigis*, as Balzac somewhere charmingly describes. However, it is not quite the same thing now, and poor Goldie never, it seems, visited Suffolk, and when the mother brought her boy to London to sit to Sir Joshua, Goldsmith was dead and well-nigh forgotten.

The same link of events gives an increased interest to the portrait of Mary Horneck, by Hoppner, mature and dignified as Mrs. Gwyn. But there is also a charming Sir Joshua, of the same, as Miss Horneck, in a Persian dress, seated on the ground, and with a face so frank and charming that it dwells in the memory from some long-time-ago exhibition, and is greeted again with delight.

Another familiar note is struck by the excellent portrait, by Gainborough, of James Christie, with a fine, thoughtful face. Here it strikes one how the costume of that period was adapted to put youth, maturity, and elderliness, on a level in respect of appearance. Mr. Christie was well-nigh fifty when that portrait was painted, and he does not look thirty. The powdered hair—as the wig formerly—bade defiance to the snows of many winters, and the closely-haven face and dignified costume gave no extra points in the youngster's favour; and Christie must have felt himself a mere youth when, in the winter of 1770, he had a small exhibition of his own, a consignment of art treasures from Naples, to be sold at his great room in Pall Mall. Three years later he was selling a collection of "ancient statues, bustos, bas-reliefs," brought over from Italy by the brothers Adam—those brothers who built the Adelphi Buildings, and who built one particular church in the county which was so portentously ugly that, although sound and substantial enough a century afterwards, the neighbourhood, roused to a sense of art, subscribed handsomely to have it pulled down.

But at this rate we shall not get through the galleries in a week. Again we have to deal with the origin of things in portraits of the family of Cocks, who appear as bankers for more than a century, and still sail under the same ensign, near Charing Cross. These portraits are exceedingly well painted, in what must be an early manner, by Zoffany, who was a German, from the Empire of Thurn and Taxis, and who worked hard at such

portraits as these for little money, till he caught the breath of Court favour, and became fashionable. The artist's fashionable style, which does not bear out the promise of his earlier work, is seen in a portrait group of some of the Spencer family.

There is another portrait group of much interest, "attributed to Zoffany," but which is before his time. The interest comes in, by its showing our favourite, and Pope's, and Gay's, saucy, fascinating Molly Lepel, the beauty of George the Second's Court, now a happy, pleasant-looking matron, with a daughter just married, who recalls the graceful sauciness of her mother. There is a younger daughter, also just married, who takes after her father, Pope's Lord Fanny, and Sporus, in delicacy of appearance and constitution, and who dies young eventually, although she looks happy enough now with the frank and handsome young squire, her husband of recent days. And, if the truth were known, the hero of the piece who takes leave of his family, the brilliant young sea captain, whose ship can be seen lying at rest on the blue sea between the marble columns, this gallant Augustus John is also recently married; but neither mother, sisters, nor the artist who paints him knows anything about it. It was this gay spark who fascinated the fair Miss Chudleigh, so that she consented to a private marriage with him, then only a younger son with no great provision, except his seamanship. Then Johnnie went to sea, and Miss Chudleigh, the voyage being a protracted one, met with an older and more staid admirer, the Duke of Kingston, a man of immense wealth, and went through the form of marriage with him. If she had known how to wait she might have been Countess of Bristol after all, for her sailor laddie eventually succeeded his brother, who died childless. But the young gentleman did not act like Enoch Arden, and go quietly away when he found that somebody else had got his wife. He made a row about it, and eventually the Duchess was tried, and convicted of bigamy. But as the Duke had left her almost everything so secured that no verdict could disturb it, she took flight to Italy, and lived there in great magnificence all the rest of her life. As for Augustus John, he does not seem ever to have got over his disappointment, and was succeeded in the earldom by a brother, whose eldest son

occupies an adjoining canvas painted by Gainsborough.

To return from the sitters to the artists. There is something interesting about this Zoffany, who has furnished many good subjects for the engraver, and whose "Cock-fight in India," painted on the spot, often attracts attention in a print-shop window. Zoffany was an adventurous kind of artist, and made himself at home in foreign capitals as well as among the Nawabs and Rajahs of India, and the dandified sporting, betting, pagoda tree-shaking officers of John Company; and he brought back a fair share of the windfalls too, from that wonderful tree. We seem to have heard of him at his quiet old-fashioned house at Strand-on-the-Green—a pleasant river-side hamlet, which people pass unnoticed as they cross Kew Bridge. Here he was not far distant from his contemporary De Louthembourg, who lived in one of those tall houses in Hammersmith Terrace, lower down the river than Chiswick Church, in the quiet graveyard of which both De Louthembourg and Hogarth lie buried. And the former is brought within hail of the present century by De Quincey, who tells us of an elder brother of his own, who went to De Louthembourg to study art.

Not far from the entrance we have two of his excellent sea fights, yard-arm to yard-arm, burning ships, flashing guns, rigging rent and tattered, while in contrast the moon, rising in stately splendour over a calm sea, or gleaming over a tempest-tossed horizon, seems to reproach the turmoil and slaughter of the hour. So excellent is the scenic effect that it is not surprising to find that the artist formed one of the earliest of the band, who from the painting-room of old Drury have found fame and even fortune in other fields of art.

Then from the lurid lights of the sea fight we may turn to the peaceful beauty of old Croma. A beautiful pair are the willow and the oak, by this most famous master. Close by is a Turner, who shows, in his early gloomy manner, a distant view of Sheerness. Yes, there is the great fighting depôt of the Channel Fleet, under a cloudy sky, with buildings looming in the distance, and a great three-master, with drooping sails, that rides heavily on the gloomy tide.

From this scene we may glide away to the gallery where the Dutch masters display the charm of the low, flat horizon, the watery highway, and the broad, sluggish

river. Here are Dutch masters, if you please, of whom the uninitiated have hardly ever heard. But every one is pleased to meet Albert Cuyp and his cows; yet for once we have a picture of his without a cow in it—a bustling river-scene on the Maas, soldiers embarking—with buldings, perhaps the Boompjes, not far away. And, for a Dutch master, what a phenomenon is Jacob Van Ruysdael, with his rocks and waterfalls, and his modern feeling for the picturesque, like one born before his due time!

Again, what a pleasant surprise to come upon old London Bridge among the Dutchmen—a careful painting of the old bridge as existing in the time of Charles the First, by one Claude de Jongh—the bridge stacked with tall, gabled houses, and gates where traitors' heads might stick; and with a drawbridge in the middle for the tall-masted caracks; and gloomy old houses rising from the water, where the Old Swan Pier is now; and the placid tide, on which is all the movement of the age—the Royal barge, with its rich canopy and hangings, wherries shooting to and fro with staid citizens and their wives, the richly-adorned craft of nobles and courtiers; and among them all a party of dark, solemn men in a long barge, which might be an ancestress of the Maria Wood of swanhoppping fame.

But without any special craze for the Dutch or Flemish Schools, who can help being delighted with the fine, manly portraiture of Frank Hals, whose bold, yet thoughtful, burghers of the period stand out as living characters, instinct with life? There are gems, too, of the finest water—first from the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace, "A Merry-making," by David Teniers, "A Dutch Revel," by Jan Steen, and Peter de Hooghe's "Card Players"—all very fine examples of the respective masters. And "An Old Woman Reading," by Nicholas Maes, is admirable in light and colour. But even these must give place to a splendid picture by Gerard Terburg, again from Buckingham Palace—a young lady in a white silk dress reading "The Letter," which gives the picture its title, with other figures.

Among the early Italian School we must not linger. Only from a technical standpoint is there much interest in the saints and Holy Families—the pietas, the triptychs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But crossing to Spain, we find Velasquez credited with two fine portraits:

of D'Olivarez, the great Spanish Minister who plotted against Richelieu in France, and fooled the Duke of Buckingham in England; and of that statesman's master, Philip the Fourth of Spain, with a good German face, in whose son, Charles, ended the line of the Spanish Hapsburgs—a termination which was the beginning of those wars of the Spanish succession which devastated Europe, and left such a burden of debt upon our shoulders. In this sense we may look with interest upon an adjoining portrait, by Velasquez, that of the Infanta Maria Theresa, Philip's daughter, who transmitted the fatal gift of the Spanish inheritance to the House of Bourbon, a mere child, and all unconscious of the unhappy destiny in store for her as the neglected wife of the "Roi Soleil."

In the same gallery there is an elaborate and magnificent work of the Flemish School, the "Adoration of the Magi," by Mabuse, very famous and interesting; and from the same collection, the Earl of Ashburnham's, comes a most interesting picture of an earlier period of the same school, "Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," by Lucas van Leyden, where Solomon appears in all the magnificence of a mediæval prince. This fine picture is the very last, No. 109, in the catalogue of oil paintings.

Returning to the large gallery, No. 3, we may find two Van Dycks of some historical interest: a flattering portrait of Henrietta Maria, the unlucky Queen of Charles the First; and a young Duke of Richmond of the Lennox Stuart line, very splendid, but effeminate, with his long, fair ringlets. An interesting group, too, both for English and Americans, is that of Lord Baltimore and his infant son, with a negro attendant. The artist is one Gerard Zocat, who, judging from this specimen of his work, ought to have acquired more fame than seems to have been given him. The chief portrait represents a strong, intelligent, acquisitive man, who grasps in his hand a map of Maryland, which belongs to him—soil and inhabitants—by virtue of a grant from the Crown. The little boy at his knee also grasps at the map, with the eagerness of a spoilt child. My lord takes his title not from the now flourishing city of Baltimore—the very reverse was the case—but from a not very important town on a rugged promontory on the Irish coast, not far from that Cape Clear whose light is so often hailed with gratitude by Atlantic voyagers. The possession of Maryland brought little good to the Calverts Lords

Baltimore. It was too vast and indefinite a possession to be grasped, and the family ended, hardly a century afterwards, in a wretched profligate, who barely escaped the gallows.

Not far off is a good portrait of Sheridan, at his most brilliant epoch—the Sheridan of Westminster Hall and the great Begum speech, and well painted by Romney. And Romney shows to advantage in this exhibition, even against the great Sir Joshua; the beauties of his court conspicuous for form and colour, while the charm and sentiment of Sir Joshua's lovely women appeal to us through a mist of faded tints. Of Romney's beauties of the day—a day in which he divided the town into factions, which sided either with him or Reynolds—his representative beauties in this collection are of no great fame beyond their own circle. We have Elizabeth Cumberland, daughter of the great—now forgotten—writer, Richard Cumberland, a daughter who afterwards became Lady Cavendish Bentinck; Mrs. Blanehard; Lady Caroline Price; Mrs. Powys; Lady Milnes: all, as far as we know, happy in having no particular history. A delightful domestic group—Mrs. Carwardine and her child—was evidently a labour of love to the handsome, if sombre, artist, whose own wife and child lived unacknowledged and obscure in a remote village in the Lake country.

Sir Joshua, perhaps, is more fortunate in his female subjects. There is beautiful Polly Kennedy, as warm-hearted as she was beautiful; the ever memorable Jessamy Bride, already alluded to; a very sweet figure of Contemplation—a sweet face, rather, for the figure is but indefinite. Then we have one of those groups in which the playfulness of childhood is so happily contrasted with maternal sweetness and grace, in "Lady Ann Butler and Child."

But, after all, the pleasantest part of the show is yet unvisited. For in the large "Water-Colour Room," and the little "Black and White" room beyond, we have spread out for our delectation an historical series of the great school of English water-colourists. There is Paul Sandby to begin with—is not his medallion the first on the façade of the Water-Colour Society's rooms in Piccadilly? But Paul Sandby is more often heard about than seen, and hence it is good for us to meet with a round half-dozen examples of his works, lent by the Queen from Windsor.

Paul began his career not long after Culloden by drawing forts, and ravelins, and bastions in the Highlands for the then Duke of Cumberland. There is a military precision about his touch that must have served him well with his pupils at the Artillery School at Woolwich, where he was professor of drawing. But his delicate washes are all good and true. Old Windsor rises before us from his sketches not without humour in the accessories, the people in the street, the chimney-sweep, the tradesman in his cart—all in pleasant contrast to the lumbering old gate with the hinges off, to the tumble-down towers and grassy walls. For in those days the Castle was a pleasant place to ramble and sketch in—a plateau with wide vacant spaces here and there, and broken walls and buildings turned to all manner of purposes. For the Castle was not then used as a Royal residence, the King when at Windsor living at the Lodge, in the Great Park, which is shown by Paul Sandby in its ruddy, comfortable pomp and state, with coaches and horses, and lacqueys in attendance.

After Sandby come a number of less known followers, many doing good work in a tentative way, working mostly for engravers and publishers, but gaining occasional glimpses at Nature. Then we have Thomas Hearne, a fine architectural and antiquarian draughtsman, and John Robert Cozens—actually the grandson of Peter the Great, a memorial of Peter's "avatar" as shipwright at Deptford. But Cozens was an industrious worker, both with burin and pencil, and here are numerous specimens of his work, chiefly Italian landscapes.

But the first of the water-colour masters who grasps the resources of his medium, is Thomas Girtin, whose works are really fine and effective. We have Tattershall Castle, a fine brick structure of the fifteenth century, erroneously, but excusably, described in the catalogue as a "Norman Keep," and the white house on Battersea Reach, with the bridge in the distance. There are no white houses now to show a reflected gleam in the waters; yet, at times, in mist and gloom, the glamour of the past comes back to us.

Soft, new scenes—a kind of Dutch view of Nature—are given us by John Varley and John S. Cotman; the latter connected with some fine published prints of Norman antiquities, but here chiefly represented

by a familiar scene in our English Low Countries. But there is one sketch of his of Twickenham, with a fine old-fashioned, red-brick house, with a screen of noble trees, all bathed in sunshine, that gives us the sentiment of such a quiet retreat most happily.

Now we come to a really great master, David Cox, the son of a whitesmith and forger of bayonets and gun-barrels, near Birmingham. But for the accident—lucky for us—of poor little David breaking his leg in his sober, unromantic way over the kitchen scraper, the world might have gained an indifferent whitesmith and lost the charming colourist. But the poor weakly cripple is only fit to be a painter; has early lessons from a miniaturist, and then turns to scene-painting as a sort of colour-boy to the scene-painter of Birmingham Theatre, under the great Macready's father. There David learnt his "effects," and he has always got one up his sleeve for the simplest sketch. Coming of age, David leaves home to seek his fortune in London, and gets employment on the scenery at "Astley's," and also makes drawings for the printsellers, and even paints scenery for provincial theatres.

David is not an adventurous youth, and being safely lodged, through the agency of his good mother, with quiet, respectable people in Lambeth Walk, he marries the eldest daughter, and settles at Dulwich, adding to his other employments that of drawing-master to the public generally. Of this period are most of his sketches on the river; he delights in wharves and old buildings, and craft gliding quietly by. A strange misfortune breaks up his little home. He is drawn for the militia and has to fly, having no means to buy a substitute; and, escaping that danger, he is transformed into the professor of drawing at the Military College at Bagshot—now Sandhurst. Here he had William Napier, of the Peninsular War, as a pupil; but he hated the whole military business, and only stayed a year.

Still the artist seems to feel that his art is hardly strong enough to go alone, and he takes a settled income at Hereford, in one of those famous, old-fashioned "ladies' schools," of which the pattern is now almost lost. And here he works zealously and contentedly for a dozen years or more, dwelling in an old thatched cottage, and delighting in the pleasant scenes he sketches upon the rivers Lugg and Wye. And

then he feels that his time has come, breaks up his camp on the Lugg, and settles in London. Another dozen years and more follow of hard, but well-remunerated, work in London. David had made his mark by this time, and had put by money; so now he is master of himself, and makes another move back to his own paternal country, and settles in a comfortable house of his own, close to the unpicturesque metropolis of hardware. David was now approaching his sixtieth year, and, you may have thought, meditated days of ease and retirement. But, strange to say, the most successful, and perhaps the most brilliant, period of his art here commenced. It was then he first discovered *Betws-y-coed*, and became the patriarch of that jolly yearly gathering, which still dwells in living memory. Nor did his eye fail, nor his hand grow dim, till he bade a conscious farewell to brush, and palette, and easel, on the very brink of the dark river of death.

Here his works speak for him—slightly represented as they are, and not with the most characteristic succession of his various periods; but still there is enough to show his merits, and he can stand side by side, even with J. M. W. Turner, in his water-colours, without fearing the contrast. Yet there are excellent drawings by Turner—a noble view of York Minster; the Mewstone, by Plymouth, with great seas breaking over it; Folkestone, as one might see it in some exalted mood of sea and sky; the Rhine, a vision of a fair river, and other fine drawings. Then we come to Peter de Wint, mannered, and rather stagey, but always effective. Then we seem to come upon modern times suddenly in William Hunt, who is a fine colourist in still life, and something of a humorist in his honest country figures. There is just a taste of Samuel Prout, famous limner of old towns and architecture. An earlier artist, George Barrett, from Dublin, is well represented in some beautiful drawings. And G. F. Robson is shown to advantage in a splendid view of Durham, and its Cathedral, "half house of God, half tower against the Scot."

But we seem to be getting to quite modern times with John Frederick Lewis, R.A. What finish and what dexterity in his works, and yet we would not give a "blot" by old farmer Cox for them all. Here is Samuel Palmer with his gorgeous skies, that contrast so painfully with

the actual chilly, murky close of day as it comes on at this present. So that there is hardly light for the great master of a day not long past—the inimitable Frederick Walker, A.R.A., here represented by some of his most sympathetic works. The well-known "Ferry," the "Fishmonger's Shop," with its humour, the "Vale of Rest," "The Wayfarers," with its pathetic suggestions and contrasts; the idyllic "Spring," "Summer," and "Autumn"—what can one want more or better than these?

THE STUDY OF GREEK.

ONE of the most burning questions of the day in the scholastic sphere is that of the retention or rejection of Greek as an essential element in the higher education. Until a very recent time every aspirant to a University degree has been required to show a certain knowledge of the Greek language and literature, and this requirement has made the teaching of it the rule and its absence the exception in the programme of all higher-grade schools throughout the country. The first step towards the disuse of Greek was taken when the Charity Commissioners, in drawing up their schemes for the administration of endowed schools of the second grade, reduced Greek to the level of an extra, and decreed that it should not be taught save on payment of an additional fee, which, though small, is in the majority of cases practically prohibitive. By this regulation, Greek ceased at once to be an essential portion of the curriculum of a large number of schools, and became, in so far as concerned them, an *ἐγ καλλώπισμα πλοΐτου*—a superfluity for the wealthy, instead of a necessary common to all who could attain to a certain standard of learning.

A more important step in the same direction has recently been taken by the University of London, which has now ceased to enforce Greek as an essential for matriculation, though it is still required of all candidates for degrees in Arts.

In the older Universities some knowledge of Greek is still exacted from all students; but even here the tide of opposition to its compulsory enforcement is rapidly rising. In 1878 a memorial signed by many of our leading scholars was addressed to the University of Cambridge,

praying that candidates for an Honour Degree might be exempt from the necessity of passing in Greek; and about the same time a statute to the same effect is said to have been actually drafted at Oxford. Even more significant is the action taken at the recent Head Master's Conference held at Oxford in December last. At this gathering of the chiefs of our great public schools, the following resolution was proposed by the head master of Harrow, Rev. J. E. C. Welldon:

"That in the opinion of this Conference it would be a gain to education if Greek were not a compulsory subject in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge."

This resolution was supported absolutely by the head masters of Winchester, Clifton, and Shrewsbury, and, with certain reservations, by the head masters of Rugby, Marlborough, and Wellington. It was lost by a majority so small as to make the ultimate victory of the champions of relaxation almost a foregone conclusion.

Since the publication of the proceedings of the Conference, the educational world has been ringing with the noise of the "Greek" controversy. Professor Freeman on the one side, and the "Journal of Education" on the other, have lashed with merciless sarcasm the head masters who were unfortunate enough to differ from their ideas. The old warfare of "Greeks" and "Trojans," which distracted the University of Oxford at the commencement of the sixteenth century, seems ready to break out afresh; and, meanwhile, the non-scholastic public looks on with wonder and amusement at the discord among the experts.

But, in truth, the question is one which the experts are practically powerless to settle. Where, as in England, education is not directed by the State, but is left to be regulated by teachers, or bodies of teachers, competing with one another for the support of the public, there, in the long run at least, the direction of education will be determined by the public demand; and the public demand, in this case, means the wishes of parents who have sons to educate.

The head master of Wellington College is reported to have said at the Head Masters' Conference that he was accustomed to hear the parent's formula: "You may teach my son anything, provided you don't teach him Greek." If the formula in question really represents

the conviction of a large number of parents, there can be no doubt that Greek will gradually sink in our chief public schools to the same position as it now holds in schools of the second grade. This change is one which, on the one hand, lies in the power of parents to bring about, and, on the other hand, primarily affects parents through its effect on their children. It must therefore be worth the while of every parent to consider with some attention the place and function of the study of Greek in the education of the present day.

In approaching the consideration of this subject, we shall do well to remind ourselves of a truth which, though often overlooked, is the foundation on which all true theories of teaching rest: the truth that education is not primarily an imparting of knowledge or information, but as its name implies, an harmonious drawing out of all the powers of human nature, whether moral, physical, or intellectual. In a narrower sense, the term is often applied to the training and development of the intellectual powers alone; and though no one acquainted with Greek literature would be willing to admit that the study of it is without effect on physical and moral growth, yet, inasmuch as it is chiefly the intellectual side of education which we are here considering, we may legitimately content ourselves for the present with this narrower definition, and consider education to be the developing of the intellect to its utmost power for the practical purposes of life.

From this point of view we may fruitfully establish a comparison between education and physical training. An oarsman training for a boat-race, a cricketer training for a series of matches, a bicyclist training for a prolonged ride; all athletes, in short, who are preparing themselves for any athletic feat, have one part of their preparation in common—namely, that which tends to the establishment of a perfect state of health. To be "in good condition"—in other words, to have every function and every muscle of the body in effective working order—is the necessary preliminary for all alike. When this is secured, it is easy to superadd to the general effectiveness of the bodily powers, the special dexterity in the use of certain muscles which is required in the particular case; and this development of special dexterity forms the second part in athletic training.

The conditions of intellectual training are precisely similar. Every man has first

to be developed as a citizen of a civilised community in general, and afterwards to this general development to superadd the training of those special dexterities which are necessary to him as a specialised citizen of a highly complex organism. Without these special dexterities he can, in a society constituted as is ours of the present day, neither do useful service to the community nor make his own living; but his power of acquiring them rapidly and effectively depends on his general intellectual development. Again, without this general development he is so lacking in versatility, so entirely reduced to the level of a machine, that if the community ceases to require the special dexterities to which he has been trained he can acquire no others, and is doomed to a life of inactivity, and possibly even of destitution, just as an over-specialised artisan is thrown permanently out of work when an improvement in production renders his special form of skill valueless to his employer. Whether therefore we look to the needs of the community, which requires that the citizens, by whose voices it is governed, should be men trained to think intelligently upon any question which may come before them—or whether we look to the needs of the individual, who depends for his support on his power to adapt his services to the needs of the community, it is clear that a general development of the intellect must precede its special training.

Hence it follows that the primary object of education is neither to cram the mind with information, nor yet to impart an empirical familiarity with the use of certain intellectual processes, but to train the mind to think with freedom, clearness, and accuracy on any subject which may be presented to it; and then to apply the mind, so trained, to the special modes of thought with which it will hereafter have most largely to deal.

Now the chief difficulty in learning to think freely, clearly, and accurately, lies in the relation of thought to the language in which thought is expressed. Without language, to fix, to define, and to record our floating conceptions of things, thought, of any but the most rudimentary kind, would be well nigh inconceivable. But the very fixity and definiteness which language gives is apt to make thought rigid, to rob it of the fluidity without which growth is impossible. Our mind seizes on one side of a complex idea, it realises that side vividly, and gives to the

idea a name which embodies and preserves that realisation. So far all is well. But the idea has many other sides, and the danger is that the name may blind us to the existence of the other sides, and so prevent us from enlarging and correcting our first conception by gradually taking them into account. It is fatally easy to imagine that what we can name we thoroughly understand. It is fatally easy to forget the essentially metaphorical nature of all language, save that which deals with the simplest impressions of the physical senses; and thus the name which, at first, was but a metaphor, a suggestive comparison thrown out to indicate the impression made upon us, comes to be treated as a clear-cut scientific record of fact. The next step is taken when the name so treated is extended by analogy to similar ideas to which the metaphor on which it is based does not apply; and thus the same name comes to be used for a large series of ideas, covering a wide mental area. The differences between the proximate members of the series may be, and generally are, very slight; but their cumulative effect is great as between the extremes, and the difference is disguised by the use of the common name. Then, the conclusions legitimately drawn at one point of the series are applied to all the ideas covered by the common name, without any suspicion that a fallacy is being committed; and language which, in its right use, is the source of clearness, becomes, thus misused, the source of confusion.

Did space permit, it would be easy to illustrate this truth from almost any sphere of human thought. The use which has been made in theology of the terms justification, election, inspiration, the "real" presence; in politics, of the terms liberty, order, authority, coercion; in science, of the terms evolution, the survival of the fittest, might all serve to show how language can confuse thought as well as clear it, and to convince us that if words are our best servants they can also become the worst of tyrants.

Against this danger in the use of language, the chief safeguard lies in familiarity with several languages, or, at least, with one language differing widely from our own. A conception which under its English name appears perfectly clear and definite, is in many cases seen to be hazy and indistinct when we come to express it in a language which has no dictionary equivalent for the English name,

and in which we are, therefore, forced to render the conception by a complete phrase. This process forces us, at once, to clear our conceptions, to think them out; and the habit of translating our thoughts into other languages, or, better still, of thinking in other languages than our own, is thus the best of mental disciplines, for it compels us, whether we will or no, to follow the golden rule laid down by Pascal in the "Port Royal Logic":

"Never to abuse the equivocation of terms by failing to substitute for them, mentally, the definitions which restrict and explain them."

Now, this necessity for explaining our conceptions arises far more frequently, and is far more fundamental in the study of the classical than in that of the modern languages. The languages of nineteenth century Europe have in common a large stock of complex conceptions, and also of words either absolutely identical, or formed on the same analogy, which are used for their expression. In dealing, therefore, with the very conceptions which it is most important to treat clearly, we find that the same word represents them in English, French, and Italian, while the German term is a mere literal translation of the metaphor on which the name is based [cf. *developement*, *Entwicklung*]. In translating our thought into a modern language, therefore, we are apt to remain under the dominion of the very words whose tyranny we dread in our own.

With Greek and Latin it is not so.

The civilisation of the Greek and Latin races differs so widely from our own, the outlook of those races upon Nature and life is so distinct from ours, that in translating our conceptions into their languages, we are compelled to look at those conceptions from a new point of view, to face them as they would appear to an impartial observer whose attention was drawn to them for the first time, and to explain them as clearly as we should have to explain them to one who had never heard of them before.

The effect which the study of these languages thus exercises, in compelling us to go back from words to the thoughts which words represent, constitutes the great disciplinary value of those languages as an instrument of education. And of the two there can be no doubt that Greek is far the more effective. There are, it is true, practical reasons which render the study of Latin—the stock from which have sprung all the

languages of South Western Europe—almost imperative in our schools; but for purposes of mental training Latin cannot compare with Greek.

The Greek language combines, as no other language has combined, the opposite qualities of subtlety and lucidity; it is capable of expressing the most delicate shades of meaning, and yet remaining perfectly clear and transparent; it unites the charm of lightness which marks the highest French prose, with the exactness and precision which characterise the best German writing; it is the finest instrument ever invented by man for the expression of his thought. To be brought into contact with such a language, and to be compelled to define and clear our own conceptions by expressing them in its forms, is to have given our intellects the most truly "liberal" education which they are capable of receiving.

And this language is thus important, not only in itself, but as the key to a literature in many respects unique. The Greeks are the great original thinkers and original designers of the world—and every age of original thought and original design turns instinctively to the Greeks as to the race with which it is spiritually akin.

St. Bernard has somewhere said that of all who pursue after knowledge, only he is to be commended who pursues it for edification. The Greek would not have used the word "edification"; but the thought in its widest and noblest sense, the sense that knowledge is valuable because it builds the perfect man—was the leading idea of his life. With him clear knowledge was a passion—to see things clearly as they are was the one thing worth living for—to be deceived, to be mistaken, the worst of misfortunes. Hence that perpetual going back to first principles which makes Greek philosophical literature the most stimulating of studies to the thinker in any branch of study; hence that direct contact with Nature which makes the poetry of Greece the freshest and most spontaneous poetry of the world; hence that passionate worship of beauty—which is to form what clearness is to speech—which has made the Greek statue the model and the despair of every succeeding age.

Thus, the very qualities in which we, as Englishmen, are apt to be most lacking—the passion for clearness, for getting at the exact truth of things, and the passion for beauty, for getting at the inmost form of

things, as they exist in the mind of their Divine Architect—these are fostered by the study of Greek as they are fostered by no other form of education; and the boy must be pronounced unhappy who, having this well of fresh water ready to his lips, is allowed to pass it by untasted.

On the other hand, it must freely be admitted that if the study of Greek is thus a valuable mental discipline, it is so only when it is carried to a certain point of attainment. The student to whom it means nothing gains nothing by it. The school-boy who never gets beyond the "Anabasis" of Xenophon; the undergraduate, whether passman or candidate for scientific or mathematical honours, who manages to scrape through two Greek plays and a couple of books of Greek prose by learning his crib by heart, has probably derived no benefit from the study which might not have been gained with infinitely less labour from other subjects.

Inasmuch, therefore, as the time given to school education is necessarily limited, and only a restricted number of subjects can be studied with any thoroughness, it is evident that in many cases Greek must be sacrificed. It must be abandoned in the case of boys who are to leave school at a comparatively early age to enter on a business career; it probably should be abandoned in the case of those who, after two or three years of genuine trial, appear intellectually incapable of the study. But to prevent a boy who might have derived the full benefits of the Greek language and literature from embarking upon the study of them, and that under the pressure of no practical necessity, but in obedience to an unreasoned prejudice, is to inflict upon him the cruellest of wrongs; it is to cripple him as a thinker in all the higher branches of human thought, and to decree that he shall enter the kingdom of the intellect halt and maimed, if, indeed, it be not, in many a case, to prevent him from entering it altogether.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. CULLINGWORTH, though not gifted with sensitiveness regarding some matters which are supposed to be outside the lines of high-minded action, was not wholly

without a sense of honour ; such as we are told exists amongst thieves. He was determined on winning his client's cause, and would leave no stone unturned to attain that end, no matter how dirty that stone might be, and what mud and slime and loathsome crawling things might be revealed, and set in motion by the turning ; and he would never have betrayed a client's trust by giving a hint to the outside world of what was going on. But, alas ! this secret was not in his keeping. Every man, woman, and child within forty miles of Oswaldburn knew that Miss Treverton denied the legality of her father's marriage, and was taking steps to have it set aside. Consequently, a paragraph appeared in one of the small, so-called society papers, which was copied into many provincial papers, and naturally into every paper in Sir Everard's own county :

"A cause célèbre of startling interest will shortly come before the Law Courts, in which the honour of an ancient family is deeply concerned. It will be remembered that a short time ago, Sir Everard Treverton, of Oswaldburn Chase, Moorlandshire, was married at the British Embassy, Paris, to a young lady of great attractions, whose acquaintance he had very recently made. Though nothing was positively known against the lady, the marriage caused a painful family quarrel, and the lawyers and private enquiry offices are supposed to be busily at work in the matter. It is said that there are grave grounds for doubt as to the legality of the marriage, which was admittedly a very hurried and secret affair. It is not unlikely that before long the Treverton marriage case will become as famous as the old Yalverton case. There is grave reason to believe that something very like bigamy may be proved against one of the parties concerned."

Sir Everard and Lady Treverton, who never read society papers, and who rarely glanced at the local papers, were the very last to hear of this terrible scandal, which took hold of the public none the less firmly, because the paper responsible for it lived on the fame it won through libel actions. Being a penny paper, it had an extensive circulation in third-class railway carriages, pits of theatres, and public-houses. It was in the pit of the Adelphi Theatre that a stranger from the prairies read it, willing away the weary wait till the curtain should rise.

"Well ! If such a stroke of luck ever

happened !" he muttered between his teeth. He rose at once ; crushed past the packed rows of audience, for he had the best place in the middle front of the pit ; heedless of the corns he walked over, and the language he called forth. He had waited long for this good place ; he had longed ardently to see the "Shaughraun," which was a brand-new play to him ; but there was something for which he had waited far longer, far more patiently ; a story he had to tell far more stirring than the "Shaughraun," or any play that ever was played on mimic stage.

He found his way to a private enquiry office. It was closed ; but he gained admittance on the strength of important information. He was referred to Mr. Cullingworth, of Bedford Row ; at this hour presumably at his private residence in Woburn Square.

To Woburn Square he bent his steps ; it was only ten minutes' walk. Mr. Cullingworth was dining out ; would not be in before twelve. The stranger said he would call again. Mr. Cullingworth would be glad to hear such news as his, coming however late at night.

Mr. Cullingworth returned at one, and found the stranger waiting. He called himself Isaac Stort ; on business connected with the Treverton marriage case.

At four next morning, Isaac Stort might have been seen wending his way from Woburn Square to his lodgings in Soho. Later, the telegraph clerk at the High Holborn post office was knocked up by Mr. Cullingworth, who handed in a number of telegrams, chiefly for foreign climes. One was addressed to Miss Treverton, at a Brook Street hotel, and was handed to her by her maid a little after six o'clock :

"Come to me at once, at 70, Woburn Square. Cullingworth."

Helena sprang from her bed. Then he had found it all out. Nothing but triumphant fact could, of course, have bid him summon her at such an hour. Breakfast ! As if there was time for such a superfluity ! As if she needed food or stimulant after such glorious news !

But she had to wait for Mr. Cullingworth, who had hardly expected such prompt response, and had allowed himself some repose after his busy night. When awakened, he was obliged to have his bath, to clear his sleepy head. He found Helena at last, frantic with impatience.

"Then it is settled !" she burst out. "My father's second marriage is null and

void? There is not a doubt in the matter!"

"Sir Everard's second marriage was null and void. I fear there is not a doubt in the matter," said the lawyer, gravely.

"Well!" she exclaimed, looking perplexed at his manner. "Do you mean it is not yet quite certain?"

"We must, of course, have written proofs. They are easily procurable. If you choose, I can have them in my hands to-day."

He spoke slowly, and looked at her in a curiously observant way she did not understand.

"Let me advise you not to go on with your case, Miss Treverton," he said; "you will be very sorry for it if you do."

"Not go on with it! When we are sure of success! When success is ours! When the case is done with irrevocably," she exclaimed. "I suppose you are thinking of the shock to my father, and that afterwards I may repent of what I have brought upon him? I assure you there is not the least fear of such a thing. I know my father, and that he will only thank me for what I have done. He will not even regret his misplaced fancy. I am the only one he loves. I shall make up to him for the poor thing he loses, even were it the treasure he must have been cheated into believing it."

"I will tell you the story I heard last night, or, rather, this morning," said Mr. Cullingworth. "Before I do so, remember it may be a trumped-up tale; we have not proofs—not all of them—yet. Those I have in my possession may be forgeries."

"Oh, they are not! I know they are not! So you have proofs! Let me see them at once."

"I must prepare you, Miss"—he made a moment's pause, but she did not notice it—"it would be too great a shock to show them to you now. Have you breakfasted? No, my dear madam, I must insist on your taking some refreshment before we begin to discuss business matters."

He poured out a glass of wine; he found a box of biscuits and brought them to Helena, who, after an angry protest, drank the wine and accepted a biscuit as meekly as the witnesses against him answered to his cross-examinations. Then he began quietly and deliberately:

"A man who calls himself Isaac Stort called upon me last night. He is not a very respectable-looking character; but he has led a roving life since his boyhood,

which seems to have been spent in your neighbourhood—in Monkchester."

"I don't remember ever having heard the name; but, of course, Monkchester is quite a good-sized town."

"He had a sister; her name was Emily—a very pretty girl. She was barmaid at the 'Treverton Arms.'"

"But the person supposed to have married my father is extremely plain."

"It is very difficult to me to tell you what followed—you, Sir Everard's daughter."

Helena flushed scarlet, and then turned deadly pale.

"What bears upon the case you must tell me at any cost of private feeling," she said, quickly.

"This bears upon the case, since her brother declares her to have been Sir Everard's lawful wife."

"Then what good does his information do us?" Helena asked, impatiently. "I do not understand—do you mean that—really, Mr. Cullingworth, you must tell your story more plainly. The man seems to have turned up as a witness on the other side. You led me to expect quite the contrary. I am quite aware that the marriage cannot be dissolved because she is a barmaid."

"I do not suggest that the present Lady Treverton was a barmaid. My informant came, for reasons of his own, to tell me that Sir Everard was perfectly free to marry her; his reason was, that he expects to be paid handsomely by Sir Everard for his information. The mistake he made was in coming to me instead of Messrs. Larrook and Key. He had told the people at the enquiry office that he had important information to give regarding the Treverton marriage case, so the clerk sent him to me."

"I don't understand a word of it!" declared Helena.

"He did not know that Sir Everard had married again till he read the paragraph in a paper called 'The Glow-worm.' In it he read that one of the parties to the marriage was suspected of having committed bigamy. He came to assure me that Sir Everard had not lately committed bigamy, his former wife having been dead many years."

"My mother died in 1865—twenty-four years ago," Helena put in with impatient scorn.

"Of course I am aware that that is the correct date of Lady Augusta Sinclair's death."

"Then what are you keeping back to tell me?"

"A story that it is difficult to tell a young lady."

"Nevertheless, I must hear it. I suppose it is the story of this Beatrix Lyon, or Tigar, or whatever she has chosen to call herself."

"It is the story of Emily Stort."

She signified by a gesture that all names were the same to her.

"Many years ago, in 1863, a young man of position fell in love with her. He was just of age. He ran away with her to Scotland, where they went through some ceremony of marriage, perfectly valid according to Scotch law."

"She looks quite old enough for that," commented Helena, inwardly, "though, of course, she makes herself up younger."

"It happened she had another lover, with whom she had quarrelled. She was a young woman, evidently, of temper as uncertain as her principles were easy. She quarrelled with her aristocratic husband a week after their marriage. She told him enough of her other love affair to make him glad to be rid of her on any terms, so long as no one knew how he had been befooled. He was very young and sensitive. She left him for this other lover, telling him she knew the Scotch marriage was no marriage, and was married again in Liverpool, and went to America with her brother and the new husband. The ship was wrecked, but most of the crew and passengers were saved; these three amongst the number."

"Then it occurred to Mr. Isaac Stort to take advantage of the accident. No one in their native town believed that Emily had married her grand lover. Her mother was dying of a broken heart; her father had gone out of his mind with shame, and threatened to shoot the man who had robbed him of his child. Isaac wrote to them that Emily was safe in America, married to her first love, and not to the other; but, to let the old scandal die out, they must say that she was drowned in the wreck of the 'Janet.' He wrote to the man, who was her lawful husband, that she was drowned who had never been his wife. Nevertheless, she did not die until 1870."

"Died! What do you mean? She is not dead!"

"I have the certificate of her death here; also of her marriage in 1863 with—can you not guess with whom?"

"Not in the least. How is it possible?"

"Then I must tell you in plain words why you will not wish to go on with the case. The man only wants money. He has kept the certificates about him all these years for that purpose. He has long lost sight of Monkchester, and did not know of Sir Everard's recent marriage until he saw the fatal paragraph. He lived in the backwoods until he came to London a week ago, summoned by our agents, who had heard of him as a man who once boasted when he was drunk that he could tell something Sir Everard Treverton would pay him hundreds down to hold his tongue about; summoned indirectly, but surely by you—Sir Everard's daughter."

Helena had turned pale again. She made an attempt at speech, but the words did not come. She was trembling from head to foot.

"Emily Stort's lawful husband was Sir Everard Treverton—then Captain Treverton."

Still she did not speak. He saw that she was deeply shocked—mute with anger that such a story should have been told to her; but he saw she did not understand the whole. He went on slowly and distinctly:

"I have tried to prepare you; but I see you do not understand why it will be wise for you to determine on dropping the case. Emily Stort and Beatrix Lyon, the present Lady Treverton, are not the same person. Emily Stort was your father's first wife. She died in 1870. He married your mother, Lady Augusta Sinclair, in 1864."

The whole truth had not yet entered her mind. She sat stunned and silent. He took advantage of the pause to continue quickly:

"So you see, dear Miss—Miss Helena," now she started violently, and looked wildly at him, "you must buy this man's silence, or he will go with his proofs to Sir Everard. Besides, think of all the amateur dabblers in muddy waters that this Treverton marriage case will bring forward, and all they may find in them. Sir Everard cannot be expected to act more generously by you than you have acted by him and his wife. If I may advise—"

But he spoke to the air. Helena had fallen forward upon the floor in a dead faint.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dams Darden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I. A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS.

CAN this be Corriemoor? I rub my eyes, and ask myself the question doubtfully sometimes. Corriemoor, gay with girls' blithe laughter and merry voices; Corriemoor, with every passage and corridor echoing with men's steps and restless movements, and the rustle of dresses, and all the stir and movement of young life!

We are all here, and a week has passed, and to-morrow is the day fixed for starting on the yachting trip to the lochs. I am still filled with wonder at the Laird's geniality, at Mrs. Campbell's hospitable excitement and interest, at the popularity of Douglas Hay, and the unflinching mirth and good-nature of the M'Kaye girls.

They have struck up a great friendship with Bella; but I am not one bit jealous. Of me they seem a little doubtful; they have confided to Bella that I am so grave and serious—they cannot quite understand why. Surely as mistress of this beautiful place I ought to be perfectly happy and content.

I wonder to myself if they know how far happier they are in possession of youth, freedom, and the gaiety and innocent mirth that can only spring from natures perfectly heart-whole, and as little troubled by sentiment as the bird is by a summer's day cloud.

Dinner is over to-night, and we are all fitting in and out of each other's rooms, intent on last preparations, and endeavouring to close refractory boxes, as luggage has been strictly limited. The girls are bubbling over with mirth and excitement. Like myself, they have never been on a yacht, and curiosity is rife as to what sort of life it will be, and what sized vessel is to transport us from place to place.

But at last our preparations are complete. The luggage is despatched in advance, and when we join the yacht we are amazed to find it quite a large vessel, of some sixty tons.

The weather is delicious—a blue-grey sky, misty and cloudy; a faint, warm breeze from the south-west, ruffling the water into mimic waves. We explore the yacht with eagerness and delight—the saloon, the state rooms, the dainty hangings and decorations, the innumerable inventions for comfort and convenience in a limited space; the exquisite and delicate neatness of every detail—these are matters of wonder and excitement as well as novelty.

There is a small piano in the saloon, pictures on the walls, flowers everywhere; it is a veritable fairy floating palace. The Laird has taken all the arrangements of the tour on himself, and he and the sailing-master are on very friendly terms. We sit on deck in the quiet afternoon greyness and watch the white sails winging us up the broad channel, between Bute and Arran. The distant coast looks pale and hazy; the bays that open here and there catch strange lights and shadows of a subdued and dreamy kind. Before us, the hills of Bute, and Loch Marnoch, and the shores of Corval and Cantyre, are bathed in a soft glow, which lights up the tints of

fern and grass, and the faint promise of bloom from the heather.

We reach Tarbert soon after sunset, and anchor in the pretty little harbour. There is some discussion as to whether we will go to the hotel or remain on the yacht. The decision is strongly in favour of the latter course; so we dine in the pretty little saloon, and, after dinner, assemble on deck and watch the pallor of twilight fade into starry glory, wonderfully clear and beautiful against the dark, mountainous background. Then the moon comes up bright and resplendent, and lights up the broad bosom of the loch, and the dusky heights of the little town, and all the craggy wildness of the surrounding scenery, and the picturesque beauty of Inversnaid. Gradually the merry chatter and laughter of the girls grows subdued; a stillness and soberness falls upon us all, only broken by an occasional murmur of admiration at some change in the throbbing wonder of the heavens, or glow and sparkle of the rippling water, where moon and starlight are reflected in broken gleams. Presently, as the dusk deepens, and the moving shadows descend, the sound of music comes floating from below.

I know the touch and the voice only too well. Softly and sadly the "Farewell to Lochaber" falls on the hushed stillness, to be followed by another and yet another of the old, sweet, plaintive airs which I had been used to hear so often in the old days.

The old days! How near they seem to-night. How many soft and dangerous memories throng to my heart at sound of remembered words and familiar strains.

A brief pause, and then we hear the prelude to "Auld Robin Gray."

The tears were wet on my cheek ere the sweet, sad words had breathed their last echo. Why had he sung that song? Surely he might have remembered—A voice broke on my ear—the voice of the old Scotchman, Robert M. Kaye.

"If the laddie could do nothing else," he said, huskily, and with no attempt to conceal his emotion, "he might win tears from a stone wi' that voice of his. I mind me well in the bush yonder, how wonderful it seemed to hear the auld tunes. I could hae greeted just like any bairn when he would sit and sing to us in the hot, moonlight nights; and my lassies, well, nothing would do but they must come 'home,' as they called it, and see and hear for themselves all about Scotland and the Scotch folk, and get to know about Clans and the

Gathering o' the Highlanders, and the way they lived, and what a 'loch' was like, and the colour o' the heather which they had never seen, and moors, and mountains, and deer forests, and Heaven only knows what all. But, I'm bound to say, Mrs. Campbell, that had it not been for your gude man's offer of this yacht, they'd never have had a chance of seeing these places as they ought to be seen. I tell them they're not half grateful enough."

"Who's not grateful enough, M Kaye?" said the bluff, hearty voice of the Laird, just behind us. "Here, Athole, lassie, I've brought you a shawl to hap yourself. It's chilly sitting here in the night air."

He wrapped a warm tartan round my shoulders as he spoke. I was somewhat surprised at so unwonted an attention on his part.

He and Mr. M Kaye moved off, each with his favourite pipe aglow. I watched the stalwart figures, and felt glad that the Laird had a companion so much after his own heart. He was far more genial and pleasant now than I had ever known him.

My meditations were interrupted by Huel Penryth.

"Are you not tired of sitting there so long, Mrs. Campbell?" he asked. "Would you not like a walk over our limited deck space?"

I rose at once. I did feel rather cramped and chilled, though I had not noticed it before. We walked to and fro in the quiet starlight, voices and snatches of song and music from below came to us from time to time.

"They are all there with Douglas," said Penryth, presently. "He has a wonderful knack at music! Just set him down, and he will go on—on—playing—singing—drifting from melody to melody. That is the sort of music I like. There seems a harmonious understanding between instrument and player, notes and sound. I never tire of listening to him. You cannot imagine what it was to have him in that wild bush life. The M Kayes were simply 'daft' about him—to use their own expression."

"I wonder," I said, "that he did not marry one of them. I'm sure Jessie could never say him nay."

His eyes flashed quickly into mine, in the clear betraying moonlight.

"He is young yet," he said; "too young to commit that fatal mistake. A man should be quite sure of his own mind and his own strength before giving himself

up to any woman. Unfortunately, we too often allow passion to blind us, and waste all that is best in our hearts on women utterly worthless."

"Do you think," I asked, quickly, "that Douglas has done that? Did he ever say so?"

My jealous thoughts flew swiftly to Mrs. Dunleith. Perhaps she had played a part in Douglas Hay's life that I knew nothing about—but for which he suffered.

"He has never been very confidential," said Huel Penryth. "Men seldom are, I fancy. But he has lost youth and faith. A man has generally to thank a woman for that."

"I think," I said, coldly, "that we have as little—or as much—to thank men for."

"A case of quid pro quo, you fancy. But I think you idealise more than we do. You do not make sufficient allowance for a nature, physique, mind that are different to your own. Women are shut away from most temptations; men—thrown forcibly into them. You would have the intensity of passion, the purity of youth, the strength and fire of manhood, the chivalry of romance, and yet—a life colourless as an untempted angel's! To fail on one point is to fail in all. Women will forgive any crime save infidelity."

"Is it not the greatest against you? Would you pardon it in us for any excuse we might offer?"

"The two cases must always be relative to their surroundings; a man's heart may never waver from the devotion it has once bestowed; but his attention, his interest, his passions may do so."

I shook my head.

"It is hard to convince a woman of that; and to a woman who is innocent, and loving, and passionately faithful it seems that what she gives she should also receive. It is surely her right. What a hard and fast line you draw for us. No word, no look, no thought must waver; but for yourselves—the wide world and perfect liberty, and a passive acceptance of what you choose to bring back to us."

"Is not your nature somewhat unforgiving, Mrs. Campbell?"

"Perhaps," I said, bitterly. "But how am I to help that if it is my nature?"

"You are quoting me against myself," he said, with another of those quick penetrating glances. "It is possible to modify, to soften, to subdue. But I misjudge you by that question. Your nature is not so relentless as you pretend; but circum-

stances have helped to mar its original gentleness."

"Our conversation is drifting into personalities. After all, what does it matter about one's mental discomforts? Women's lives especially are made up of minutiae. They can get excitement, pleasure, interest out of small things. We flatter ourselves that we play an all-important part in your lives; but we do not really, not the generality of us, unless——"

"Well!" he said, as I paused and stood for a moment looking over the quiet loch, with the star-light mirrored in its depths.

"Perhaps," I said, hesitatingly, "I ought not to say it; but I was about to add, unless we should chance to be very beautiful, or very—wicked."

"I think you are right," he said.

CHAPTER II. IN THE DAWN.

THE idle, dreamy days drifted on, and the white wings bore us from place to place, and I was fain to confess that the Laird had not exaggerated the wild and picturesque beauty of his native land.

Perhaps my eyes had grown weary of that one great stretch of moorland around and beyond Corriemoor. At all events, they were ready to delight in the ever-shifting, changeful beauty that now they rested upon. For, up here in this region of loch and mountain, there were perpetual feasts of colour and loveliness: the blue, and grey, and purple, and gold of the sky; the brown and ruddy colouring of the hills; the soft floating mists that ever and again would part and reveal un-dreamt-of beauties; the rippling, azure water; the great dashes of shadow where the lochs narrowed between the towering heights. Then, in some sudden pause of stillness would come the soft whistle of the curlew; or the stir of moving wings; or the splash of the silver-scaled salmon leaping into air and sunshine, and waking echoes in the quiet summer noon.

Sometimes, when the wind failed us, as it did for two or three days at a time, we would make excursions among the chains of islands—the men doing their best to shoot any eatable wild fowl for our larder, or to catch the fish that swarmed in glittering shoals through the clear sapphire waters. Now and then we would land at some fishing village of stalwart, brown men and bare-armed, short-kirtled women, and the Laird would talk to them in their uncouth-sounding language, to the evident delight

of both parties, and wonderful would be the stories of dangers, and toils, and of hair-breadth escapes which he would gather from them.

I must confess that they were a marvel to me—their cheerfulness and content, their genial, yet shy grace of manner, and the hospitable offerings of herrings or mackerel, which were invariably made, and for which no payment would ever be taken, unless in the shape of a "dram," or some gift of a woollen shawl or petticoat for wife or bairn.

Again there would be the ever-beautiful spectacle of dashing waves breaking white and stormy in the gloom of some deep sound, or some days of gloomy skies broken up by sudden sunlight, or nights of misty moonshine, gleaming on shore and bay. And then day would dawn fresh and sparkling, and there would be the stir of feet on deck, and white sails spread to catch the welcome breeze, and the pleasant lapping of water as the yacht sped merrily along to fresh scenes and new beauties.

How genial and pleasant the Laird had become! I scarcely recognised the quiet, stolid, Donald Campbell in this bustling and quaintly humorous personage, who cracked jokes with the sailors, and took his turn at the steering, and was so interested in the fisher fleets and life of the lonely islanders; who made light of all difficulties, even the hardships of falling wind and un-supplied larder, which occasionally troubled us, and only laughed when we were blown out of our course by contrary winds, or wasted long hours in fruitless "tacking" to gain some harbour.

On the whole we were not a badly-assorted party, as yachting-parties go, for limited space and companionship are not always conducive to harmony. I could not but notice, however, as the days drifted by, that Robert M'Kaye's attention to Bella became somewhat marked and impressive. Invariably she was the companion of his walks or excursions. The two girls seemed always apportioned to Douglas and the Laird, and Huel Penryth to me. Thrown, as we were, together, Douglas Hay's avoidance and coldness to me were almost noticeable; but I had schooled myself into accepting our present position as the safest, and, indeed, the only one left us to adopt. I wondered, sometimes, why he had agreed to join our expedition. I felt certain that he, of all the party, was uncomfortable, ill at ease, and

restless. He would laugh and jest with the girls in the old, random manner; he would sing and play to us in the evening, or inaugurate a reel, or strathspey, or schottische on deck; but the laughter wanted the old, heart-whole ring, and the dance seemed to lack the gay abandon which had once been so characteristic of his movements.

One morning I rose very early, and went down to the shore. A cold wind was blowing from the sea, the sky was still grey and colourless, waiting for the warmth of the sun, which had not yet appeared above the heights, or touched the black hollows of the tossing waves.

The yacht lay at anchor some distance off. We were to go on board after breakfast, and proceed up the Crinan Canal, making Oban our next halting place, if the wind favoured us. I had slept badly all night, and feeling too feverish and restless to remain in bed any longer, had resolved to take a long walk before returning to the comparative inactivity of yacht life.

Sky and sea and coast had a strangely weird look under the dusk of the sunless morning; but as I went on over the rough rocks and boulders, a strange light burned like gold through the filmy mist that hung like a curtain in the East. I stood still and watched it—breathless with sudden wonder. That colourless film was suddenly transformed into a rose-coloured veil of transparent and ethereal beauty; and that again was suddenly lifted and swept asunder as by a living hand, while all around its edges, and all around the clouds that drifted seawards, broke a thousand sharp jewel-like lines of flame; and then over the dull-hued water spread a flush of faint pink, deepening into yellow gold, as the sun rose higher and yet higher. Then came the stir of awaking life in the gorse and heather where the young birds fluttered joyously, undisturbed as yet by sportsman's gun, and the slow flapping of wings, as the stately herons sailed landwards to some rocky pool, half hidden among the tall, dark reeds.

I stood there with clasped hands, drinking in the beauty of the scene, and the loneliness and strangeness of it. It was the first time I had seen the sun rise and the day waken amidst those mountain solitudes. I felt selfishly glad to be the only spectator, to feel that I and the new day had the world to ourselves, with no intrusive voice or presence to disturb our enjoyment.

I felt that I needed no companionship save my own; that even the best loved voice would jar on my feelings then. I sank down on the rough stones, and for a moment hid my face in my hands, overcome by a rush of feelings that were sharp as pain, and sweet as joy—and yet moved me rather to tears than to words. As I lifted my head at last, and looked up at the brightening sky, I saw I was no longer alone. Some ten yards from me—his arms folded across his chest—his eyes fixed coldly but intently on my face, stood—Douglas Hay.

The first surprise of seeing him so near, and alone, was almost a shock to me. I did not move. I only looked quietly back at him, while a strange stillness and numbness seemed to chill my heart, and creep through my veins.

"I saw you come out," he said, "and I followed you."

I was silent. The abruptness of his words, the pallor of his face, the strange look in his eyes, held me speechless with a sudden, vague terror. For one swift moment the hands of Time went back; we were standing together under the brooding darkness of the Hill of Fairies, and the light of sunset—not of sunrise—was upon a pleading face that vainly sought relenting or forgiveness in mine.

I sat there, waiting for further words, my eyes on the roughened water, that still looked green and grey in the morning mists. It seemed to me that in its restlessness and mystery of distance it was not unlike the human lives that meet and seem to touch, and yet can drift so utterly, utterly apart.

It might have been a moment, an hour, that Douglas stood there, pale, and stern, and watchful; then he came nearer, and seated himself beside me on the rough rocks.

"Why were you crying just now?" he asked, abruptly.

"I was not——" I stammered; then suddenly put up my hand to wet cheeks, and felt confused at the needless falsehood. "I—I hardly know," I stammered. "I had been watching the sun rise; it was all so wonderful, so beautiful. And yet there is something sad in such beauty; it recalls youth, and innocence, and peace. If only the new day would wash our souls clean from sins and errors, as it seems to cleanse the world from gloom and darkness!"

"Fanciful, but impossible," he said,

with something almost like a sneer in his voice. "I think the day would have enough to do if that task was set before it."

Presently he continued:

"I was watching the sunrise, too, but certainly it had no such softening effect upon me as you seem to have experienced. I am sick of the sea and the mountains, sick of the daylight that has no hope in its dawn, no rest in its death. Athole, do you remember the day we went to the Witch's Cave?"

"Yes," I said, wonderingly. "How long ago it seems."

"And her prophecy has come true," he said, gloomily. "You did marry another man; and yet—— Oh, how sure I felt of you there!"

"And I—of you," I said. "But why speak of it again? Have we not agreed to bury the past? It is so useless to recall that time."

"I know it. Do you suppose I would have come here—have consented to become your husband's guest—if I had not thought that I was strong enough to keep the past in the background? You cannot say that I have forced myself upon your notice. I flatter myself I have grown quite an adept at self-effacement."

His face so hard, his voice so bitter, and yet—— Oh, that look in your eyes, Douglas, Douglas!

"It was not easy always," he went on. "Perhaps Huel's praises of you made it harder. I—I think I am jealous of him, though Heaven knows I have no right to be. Sometimes I grow half mad listening to, and joining in with, those chattering magpies of girls, and straining my ears all the time for the low, sweet, even tones I remember so well, which are so kind, and gentle, and sweet to every one but me."

"Oh, Douglas," I said, and a sudden rush of pity thrilled my pulses.

Involuntarily I turned to him and laid my hand on his arm.

"I am sorry for you, indeed, indeed I am; but it is best that I should be cold and hard, or seem it. If there were any use—any hope——"

My voice broke; a sob caught the words and stifled them.

"I know I behaved very badly," he said, his own voice unsteady and uncertain now. "Oh, if you knew the times and times that I have cursed my folly! Sometimes I look back, and I cannot believe that

we are really parted; I see that room, and you in your white dress, and I hear the very music of the reel we danced, and——"

"And you are singing again of the 'braw wooer,' I said. "Did you think you left an aching heart behind you, that night, Douglas?"

"No," he said, "I did not. I was jealous, miserable, reckless. Then came a scene with my father, and, in one of my bad impulses, I tore off to Edinburgh."

"And to—Mrs. Dunleith?"

His face flushed.

"Were you really jealous of her, Athole? It seems so strange. A man cannot be false, or what he considers false, when he loves one woman. All others are but pale reflections. He sees her face, he hears her voice, even as he looks into other eyes and seems to listen to other voices; and his clasp has no passion, and his kiss no rapture; and weariness and disgust are all he knows, even after brief forgetfulness. Ah! believe me, there never yet was a man who tried to cheat himself into such forgetfulness and did not suffer a thousand-fold for every moment of oblivion he purchased."

The water brightened at our feet, the birds' songs rose louder and clearer, as the day wooed them from bough and brake. The great heights took light and colour from the glowing sky. The throbbing pulses of Nature beat afresh in the waking world. Only to us, poor drift-weed of poor humanity, came no gladness, no hope—nothing but the sorrow of vain regrets, the stab of remembered pain.

Again Douglas spoke.

"You used to be very truthful, Athole; almost bluntly so. I wish you would tell me why you were crying when I found you. Are you unhappy?"

My eyes met his, answering his question before my lips.

"Yes; and yet not altogether unhappy. It is a passive, not an active condition of mind, born chiefly of dissatisfaction. Now, are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly."

The answer was concise and cold. Again silence fell between us. The sun seemed veiled, the stillness grew almost painful. I moved restlessly in my rocky seat.

He started and looked down at me.

"Shall we walk on?" he said, "unless you are going back to the hotel; but no one will be up yet, I am sure."

"I am not going back yet," I said, with a little shiver. I felt cold and cramped after sitting there so long.

"May I come with you?" he asked ceremoniously. "Don't say 'yes' if you'd rather not. You needn't play the hypocrite with me."

"If you wish—you may walk with me," I said.

He held out his hand to assist me over the rough stones, and we walked silently on together in the golden morning light.

"Do you know," said Douglas suddenly, as we ascended the hill side, leaving the loch behind us, "that I once perpetrated the folly of keeping a diary. It was when I had parted from Scotland and—and you—and was on my way to a new land and new scenes. I began it on the ship that was wrecked, and, strange to say, although I lost most of my possessions, I managed to save that. I found it the other day among a lot of papers and letters. I wonder if you would care to see it?"

"Indeed, I should," I exclaimed, eagerly.

"It will give you some idea of my life and feelings at that time," he said, gloomily; "and also an account of my acquaintance with Penryth. You like him, do you not?"

"Very much," I said.

"I am glad of that. You may enjoy his companionship uninterruptedly from to-day."

"Why?" I asked, startled at the announcement. "What do you mean?"

"I am not going on with you all," he said in a strained, cold voice. "I—I—well, there's no use beating about the bush—I can't bear it any longer, Athole. I—I have over-taxed my strength, that is the plain, simple truth. I have tried to play at friendship. I have tried to avoid you. I have schooled myself to betray no feeling; to pretend that we two who once loved so dearly are but the veriest strangers. Well, I have done my best; a man can do no more. But, I tell you frankly and honestly, it is beyond me. What your own feelings are it is not for me to say. Heaven grant you may never know the fever, and agony, and turmoil of mine! For as surely as we stand here now, Athole—the world our own, the silence and solemnity of the new day our only witness—I swear to you that I never loved nor can love any living woman save yourself. And coldness, and estrangement, and effort, and duty, and honour—what have they done? What have they

proved! Only that I love you more madly than ever I did in the years that are gone. . . . Oh, if only we could have them back!"

THE CAREER OF INVALID.

It is an agreeable thing to be an invalid—in moderation; with, of course, the added condition that one has no need to be tinker, tailor, or ought else for the sake of a livelihood. With five hundred a year and upwards, the professional invalid may enjoy life in a way of which his robust brother tolling and molling in a pestilential city from January to December of each year has little idea. He has no anxieties, except about his portmanteau. He steers clear of those precious bonds of domesticity which, though delightful enough at times, are also at times galling, and are always a forcible restraint upon the liberty of the subject. He is lord of himself. He possesses those two priceless privileges—as Schopenhauer reckoned them—leisure and independence. No man can say unto him: "Thou shalt do this; thou mayst not do that."

When other men, whose constitutions would satisfy the most rigorous of Insurance Societies, are, with the appearance of the dear fogs of November, beginning their annual course of catarrh, our friend the accomplished invalid is on the eve of his annual pleasure trip. He prattles about it as "exile," or as a step upon which his very life depends; but you must not believe more than a third of what he says in the matter. He pretends that he is mightily perplexed and pained by doubt as to whither he shall fly to escape the winter of his distress. His rooms are littered with guide books and letters from obliging British Consuls. The tone of these latter sufficiently illustrates the frame of mind of our poor harassed wanderer. Here is one of them:

"MY DEAR SIR,—It gives me very great pleasure to answer your enquiries about Timbuctoo. I will take them *seriatim*.

"1. The climate here from November to April—inclusive—is as nearly perfect as any climate can be. The days are warm certainly, but not too warm for active exercise. The nights are dry, with a comparatively slight fall in the temperature. It rains about twenty times in the six months, and very nice the rains are. You

can almost see the grain grow after our showers. There is not more risk of a fever here than of small-pox in the old country. If you take care not to eat too much, and avoid the water—there's capital wine to make up for that—you will do well enough here. Maximum of my thermometer last year during this period, eighty degrees; minimum, fifty-five degrees. How does that suit you?

"2. As to game: there's any quantity—from lions to rabbits. Bring all your weapons, and you will find each will come in. Ammunition is rather scarce in these parts, so a cargo of it would be advisable. I venture to say you will not be disappointed with the record of your bags and booty when you leave us—you see I am quite expecting you!

"3. Accommodation is not very first-class, as you may suppose likely in so new a country. The one hotel is dirty, and not fit for you. But don't let that keep you from running down here. My wife and I will make you at home, if you will let us. She—my wife—is from your county, and knows something of your people. We have been married only a year; but a little fresh society will do us both all the good in the world. Young married people have, I fancy, a knack of making fools of themselves unless they are early broken of the trick. Your room is already decided upon; and if you like uncommon landscapes, the view from your window ought to please you. It is a jumble of palm-trees and mountains behind hard to beat. So that's settled.

"4. Society—from this standpoint, as you will infer from the above, Timbuctoo is somewhat flat. It isn't as lively as Algiers, nor yet Tangier. All the same, we can assure you a carpet dance two or three times a week, as there are Consuls of all the big nations with their families, as well as a few score visitors, more or less, like yourself—some with their wives and daughters. The place is looking up more every year, as it becomes better known. Last season, for example, we had Dean Bagshot, and all his girls—five. He was so charmed with his experiences that, no doubt, he will crack up Timbuctoo among his friends. This may bring us a number of the clergy with their women-folk—I don't know what your tastes are in that direction.

"Well, well, how I am rambling on, to be sure! You see, my dear sir, down here one has no little difficulty in killing time to one's satisfaction, and so I don't mind

boring you with a few pages of letter in answer to your note.

"However, I think I have replied to your enquiries, and, I hope, I have also said enough to make you feel that you will be heartily welcome at the Consulate when you can turn up. Send me a line as soon as possible; otherwise I may think you are not coming, and may offer the room to some one else.

"Believe me, my dear sir,

"Faithfully yours,

"FARQUHAR MUNCHAUSEN"

This letter is but one of several of the like kind, and our invalid is puzzled to death to determine which he shall say "yes" to. It is all very well to live in a Consulate, especially when the Consul is a newly married man; but it would break his heart to create even an appearance of sponging on a British representative, unless he saw his way clear to a reciprocation of the courtesy. Besides, it is just possible Timbuctoo may really be too warm, in spite of the Consul's letter. It matters not one rap about the language. The people of Timbuctoo, like the people elsewhere, may be trusted to understand our friend's English if it is to their profit to do so. Poor travellers, with hardly anything a year, are, of course, bound to learn the different languages. But not so the average vagabond invalid with an income that keeps him aloof from all thoughts about ways and means. He can hold his head high in the midst of a storm of abuse in a foreign tongue, and feel not a whit the worse for it, though he realises by intuition that it is levelled at him.

It is at least possible that, after replying to the Consul at Timbuctoo, and saying he hopes to be with him in three or four weeks' time, he changes his mind at the last moment, and runs to the Engadine. There he finds the thermometer a score or two of degrees below freezing point. He does not exactly like it, but then Davos is so much more lively than Timbuctoo is likely to be. Besides, he remembers meeting last year two or three people who told him they intended to be among the Alps for the ensuing winter.

But no one—least of all our friend himself—can say how long he will stay in any one spot. A degree more of frost than would be enough to make a robust man grumble and yearn for a warmer air, may suddenly set him on the move again. Blue skies and snow become monotonous

in time, and he pines for an honest fog of the Strand for a change. It may be, however, that he has got his heart into difficulties, in this remote nook of Switzerland—or some one else's heart. Flight is not an heroic remedy for a complaint of this kind; but it is the only one for a man who is determined to view matrimony as an experience that would be sure to disagree very much with him. Our girls at home have acquired a character for their matchless self-possession and unwillingness to do aught that shall disturb the sacred calm of their countenances. One is disposed to think that they do not quite merit their reputation in this respect. Be that as it may, in a foreign health-resort many of them put off this chilling armour of self-protection against the wiles of mankind. A flirtation in an hotel is not half so wicked as a flirtation at home. The gentle coquetry of soul with soul is indeed one of the conventional solaces of a health-resort, and you will find that the accomplished invalid of a few years' standing is not to be anared by a mere glance, be the eyes which are its medium ever so bewitching.

There is often a certain spirit of recklessness abroad among a coterie of invalids which has a tendency to give rise to dramatic incidents. It seems to be of the kind hinted at in the words, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." It had its parallel in the reign of King Guillotine during the French Revolution. The doctors of the place may shake their heads with a sense of the gravity of the physical condition of their patients; but even that portentous sign will not recall the reason of these particular invalids. They know or believe that their days are numbered. They have already had enough and to spare of prudence and precautions. The joy of a brief spell of unrestraint and challenge to the enemy to do its worst is too alluring. Hence proceed divers tragic events for the profit of the newspapers. Every occasional visitor to any famous health-resort can recollect two or three such incidents. It is grim work tilting with the inevitable; and it is hard not to sympathise in part with these victims of circumstance, impulse, and the tedium of curative routine.

This is by way of a parenthesis. Our friend, who may be called the hero of this paper, is not likely to hasten his end so suicidally. Quite the contrary. If he finds that his heart is really touched to a

degree that seems to menace his health, upon the whole he may be trusted to perceive that his duty to himself impels him to put a summary end to the danger. It is not that he is so very careful a hedonist, or is as indifferent as Nature herself to the suffering of individuals—other than himself—so long as the type—that is, himself—is kept whole and sound. He would of course rather do a fellow creature a good turn than an ill turn. But habit has made him so regardful of himself, that he can hardly look at things from any standpoint except his own. It is not wilful cruelty on his part if, because his temperature has suddenly become abnormal, or his heart beats in an annoyingly erratic way, he abruptly says "Good-bye" to the lady whose affections he has won wittingly or unwittingly. The common instincts of his nature bid him depart at all costs—in self-preservation; and he does so. It is to be hoped, moreover, that he believes others are worldly-wise as himself. The lady of his heart, being an invalid, will, doubtless, thank him for removing himself from her society ere she also be made to suffer by the excitement of their intercourse.

The travelling invalid seems to be under the protection of a special Providence. He comes unscathed out of the most manifest perils. With a faith that would do credit to an innocent child, he places himself in the hands of twenty doctors in as many weeks, and is yet no worse at the end of the twenty weeks than he was at the beginning. How does he manage it? one is prone to ask. For my part, I believe he finds his entertainment in comparing the prescriptions of one doctor with those of another. He accepts very varied medicines, but he does not take them. The advice of different kinds, which he receives in like manner, he treats with the like contempt.

Certainly the different injunctions of his different medical advisers are enough to make him smile at the mere sight of a medicine bottle.

The Herr Physician-in-Chief at Mudbad thinks almost any malady may be cured if the patient only be made to perspire sufficiently.

In the Swiss highlands, on the other hand, our friend is expected to get as fat as he can, and to become as tawny as a gipsy.

No self-respecting microbe, it is said, will tolerate Davos for more than two years.

Unless, therefore, our friend is really very ill, and if he is still fairly strong, the Swiss mountains will put him to rights. As a matter of fact, however, he knows more than the doctors. He does not stay two years in Davos because he is tired to death of the place in two months, and because, too, he knows well he will live quite as long elsewhere. Moreover, he rather likes shocking the faculty, if only to give them a lesson in humility.

Of course he disregards completely the more general counsel of his advisers. He is told by one doctor to sleep with his window open and lightly covered; by another with his window shut, and under several blankets; a third will not let him leave the house in the morning until an hour before noon; a fourth tells him to get up early, and take a walk before breakfast. And one and all attempt to physic him with medicines of price. It is an odd business. They cannot be blamed. Neither can he.

The ordinary traveller is constantly meeting the professional invalid where he would least expect to find him: upon the tops of mountains, in the teeth of icy blasts; in suffocating billiard-rooms, at midnight; at prize fights, in cellars and other out-of-the-way places; seated at the green tables of Monte Carlo; or in the slums of Naples, where, it is thought, one may catch a fever as easy as breathing. The ordinary traveller's tour is cut short as often as not by a typhus or blood-poisoning; and it is then as much as he can do to pull himself together for a long spell of convalescence. But his acquaintance, the invalid, jogs light-heartedly from risk to risk, sipping one pleasure after another until he is surfeited, and all with out appreciable discomfort. He does not brag about his happiness, or his immunity from contagious diseases. He takes the gifts that Heaven tenders to him, and allows his thanks to be understood. He is at one with the character in "Wilhelm Meister," who says there is nothing more insufferable than to hear people reckoning up the pleasures they enjoy. The fable of Polykrates and the ring is an obvious check upon self-congratulations of any kind.

When a man turns round to his friend at Monte Carlo with the words, "Am I not lucky?" the chances are that he puts a sudden period to what he calls his good luck. The man who tells his young wife over and over again that he is the happiest

fellow in the world, may end by inciting her to enquire of herself if her own happiness is of so surpassing a nature.

If the professional invalid were a man of literary tastes, he could write some very fine novels about his adventures. Of course these are not of a very sensational kind. He makes no pretence of going about the world like a knight errant of old, simply and solely to rescue beauty, innocence, or helplessness from the perils with which it may be encompassed; nor does he venture out of his depths into the wilds of any country in pursuit of big game, scientific objects, or undiscovered territory. Oh, dear, no. He always keeps one foot fast in civilisation, if not both. Yet even thus, entertainment of the romantic kind seems to rejoice to place itself at his disposal.

It is said that all things come to the man who waits. Like other sayings, this is not quite true; but assuming that it is, methinks the man who is indifferent is in the like agreeable case. Our friend does his best to be impassive wherever and in whatever circumstances he chances to be. It would be due to no fault of his own if he showed surprise or interest even were a star to descend from the firmament, and embed itself in the ground before his eyes by one of its points. His "how do you do?" to an acquaintance upon whom he haps in a Nile island above the second cataract differs but infinitesimally in tone from his "how do you do?" in Piccadilly. Time and space seem to be annihilated for his convenience, and he does not regard the concession as anything out of the common. When his winter's pilgrimage is at an end, he returns to England, and resumes the pleasures of the summer as if nothing of consequence had occurred since he last touched a tennis-racket a year ago. Really, indeed, that is the fact—as far as he is concerned. Though he may have been in the thick of a European revolution, or on a battle-field or two after or during the engagement, these things are of no consequence to him once the momentary thrill of interest which they aroused has dissipated into nothingness. The impression they leave upon him is less strong than that which the mere reading of the record of them sets upon the mind of the ordinary intelligent man.

Upon the whole, is it not clear that our poor friend, in this constant search for the new and the agreeable in life, does himself much wrong? He trains himself to be a spectator only in the midst of the game

and pageant of life. But he is not even a spectator of the first rank. He does not care how the battle goes. He does not try to pass on to others the emotions which proceed from his experience of the varied scenes in the drama of the world. He tests them on his own small tongue for a moment or two, and that is all. His sympathies wither and wither until it is as if he had none left. In seeking to escape even the most trivial of bodily inconveniences, he makes himself an alien to common sensibility. Men and women pass before him, and are no concern of his. If one man kills another before his eyes, well, it is a man less in the world, and no concern of his. It may even be that a woman or a child shall be in danger of drowning in his presence ere he realises that they are living mortals like himself, and that by moving hand and foot on their behalf he may save them from the death that immediately threatens them.

Perhaps there is a little fancy in this picture; but if so, it is only a little. You see, too, that I am assuming our friend is not really the invalid it suits his convenience to appear to be. He is not a Hercules; with this qualification he might else readily pass muster among the majority of men. Having once acquired standing as an invalid, however, he is loth to resign the advantages which such brevet rank confers upon him. He would do well enough at home if he cared to throw in his lot with the rest of us. But this does not suit his humour.

Indeed, if his aim be to prolong his life, he may, as a rule, congratulate himself upon his success. Somehow or other, though the Insurance companies have all looked aavance at him, and civilly declined his advances, he lives to laugh at them. His annual peregrinations seem to serve as an inoculation against mortal diseases. When first he began them—with a timid fear lest he should die at once of foreign life and cooking—his stomach was sensitive, and resentful of strange dishes. But, as time goes by, it craves these alien foods regularly when the days begin to shorten fast. They seem to give him new vigour. He no longer knows the meaning of the word dyspepsia. He can bear protracted journeys as well as the man of irreproachable physical repute.

It is so to the end. Our excellent friend at sixty is still young in comparison with his hale and hearty contemporaries who

have never taken heed to nurse their health. At seventy he continues his customary migrations south with the first autumnal frost in the home-land; indeed, his vagabond habits have become so fast riveted upon him, that only by the greatest efforts can he shake himself free of them. At seventy-five or eighty he is summoned to the bedside of his brother, who, in spite of his robust health, has been caught tripping by the enemy. Him he attends to his last, long home; nor does he take cold in the churchyard like the rest of the mourners. Perhaps at eighty-one or eighty-two our friend begins to feel premonitions that he is approaching the period when the grasshopper is a burden, and one's legs seek to go different ways at the same time. But he is not disheartened. He is assured that he has still a fund of reserve strength upon which he can draw in case of need. This being so, he is less distressed than his many nephews and nieces appear to be when, at eighty-five, he is smitten by paralysis. It is a gentle stroke, as such calamities go; but it confines him to the house for a considerable while. He is a real invalid for perhaps the first time in his life. In his ninetieth year he makes his will—as much because it is customary so to do when one is in the autumn of one's years, as for any other reason. And it is only when he is nearer a hundred than ninety-five that he falls peacefully asleep for the last time, and terminates his career. If his heirs have a discreet and not irreverent sense of humour, they may very fitly inscribe upon his tombstone the words:

"He lived and died an invalid."

IN REAR OF THE ARMY.

WITH all our experience of "little wars," with all the brilliant picturing of modern fights from the graphic pens of "our special correspondents," how little really, of all that is done during a campaign, comes to the knowledge of the good folks at home! Much that is dramatic and striking is brought before them, but much that is essential is of necessity ignored.

War is declared! Up goes the curtain. Alarums and excursions! Enter army and an admiring crowd (right); cheers and waving banners; twice round and then off (left). Edwin lingers to tell in broken accents his devotion to his Queen and to

his Angelina. Exit to help the army to protect them. Band—"The Girl I Left Behind Me"—getting fainter in the distance; Angelina faints altogether. Curtain—only to rise again on a camp scene in Africa, some hundreds of miles up country. Edwin doing "sentry-go"—and so on, and so on, and so on.

We follow all the action, whether on the stage or in the press, and are satisfied; but, after all, there is much behind of which we hear nothing, of which we know nothing, and knowing nothing care nothing. All the large army of workers behind the scenes—the stage-carpenters, the scene-shifters, the lime-light men, the stage-manager above all—whose constant, earnest, well-drilled efforts are as needed for success as Edwin's own. What do we know of them! One figure stands there solemn and still in the moonlight; around are grouped the lumbering forms of the soldiers; long lines of tents stand silently suggestive of a mighty host; a camp fire flickers (up stage R). A lovely picture, and Edwin the central figure of it all. The house is awe-struck for awhile, and then comes round after round of delighted applause. But, oh! if the lime-light man would let his moon go out; oh! if the curtain would but go up one minute earlier, and show the retreating legs of the manager; oh! that all would go wrong for a moment, just to show how easy it is to go wrong! But no, the army of workers behind have done their work too well, and Edwin, the central figure, receives the plaudits of the tight-packed house.

My object now is to tell a few of the thousand essentials in real warfare, which correspond to the duties of this unseen band of workers. How true it is that, unless "things go wrong," nothing, or next to nothing, is known or thought of them; and yet it is as true as any other of the fixed principles of war, that unless the arrangements in rear of the army are minutely accurate, that army is bound hand and foot—it cannot fight, it cannot march, it cannot live.

The main requirements of an army in the field, beyond its own discipline, courage, and endurance, may be thus summed up:

"Secure the comfort of my men; give them their daily food; give them ammunition at once to refill their empty pouches; take away and care for my sick and wounded; be near me all the while with both hands full, that I may take from them all I need; remove all encumbrances that

I do not want, prisoners and spoils of war ; safeguard my baggage ; supply me with reinforcements ; guard my rear that no one may hinder you while doing this, and I ask no more."

Let us see what it amounts to. Space will not admit of detail, nor of considering many of the points. Let us take one only, "Give them their daily food." Many of the conditions are identical for other points. Let us a little elaborate this one.

Edwin was on "sentry-go" some hundred miles up country in Africa, when last we saw him ; how did he get there ? And now did he get his dinner to-day ? He is a particular man like all his comrades, he heeds his bread and his beef—and small blame to him, he has to work hard for them—his tea, sugar, salt, and little "extras" ; and though it is the fashion to chaff about "bully" beef and army rations generally, it is Edwin's cookery, and not the victuals, that should mostly bear the blame.

Well, when Edwin landed on the coast, he saw around him a fleet of transports bearing troops, and a fleet of store-ships bearing stores—stores of all kinds, tents, ropes, harness, tools, tinned-meats, biscuits, clothing, medicines, arms, ammunition, whole arsenals of stores—and he saw them hour after hour being landed as mountains on the sea-shore. All seemed chaos, but everything is clearly marked ; every crate, bale, case, box, or barrel can be identified, and gradually order reigns ; magazines and store-houses rise, and the mountains become little scattered hills, accessible and handy. Now is the time for workers. Everything is wanted at once by the troops ; and for everything issued to them the public will want an account and a printed receipt. There is the office (!) and the work in it must be as good as though it were the every-day work of the few officers and soldier-clerks, bred to peace routine, who have to do it. How easy it would be if only the troops weren't there, and there were a fortnight to get ready in ! But the troops are there ; until they were, the stores would not be safe—unless the stores were there the troops would starve ; the stores exist for the troops and the troops must have them at once, and as methodically as at Aldershot, or somebody will be hauled over the coals for a lost bayonet, or an unaccounted for pound of biscuit, some two years hence. Customers are many, and time is short.

There are thirty thousand of Edwin's

brothers in the field, and ten thousand horses. To provision them for three months—and a less supply would fetter the movement of the army—will need roughly some eleven thousand tons of food and forage. Imagine it all collected, landed and stored. The army is at the port or near it. All it has to do is to send a short distance for its food. True, but the army is not going to stay there. It is going forward to do its work ; how are these supplies to follow it ? What does the army do ?

Each fraction of the army is so organised in war, that, wherever it goes, it bears with it rations for three days ; so that, if the worst comes to the worst, it can subsist for that time without help. Each man carries on his person food for one day, a tinned ration, with instructions to use it on emergency only, and never without an order. Food for two more days is carried with him in waggons detailed for this duty only ; each regiment or unit having its own waggons, driven by its own men, which march and encamp with the troops ; these waggons we will call the Regimental Transport, though it is part only of all that is known by that name.

All being ready, the army leaves its "base," and marches, say, fifteen miles towards the enemy. The "base" is the port where all it wants is stored. The next day it marches another fifteen miles, and so on ; and it becomes apparent that further means are needful to send on the food, for of what use would be ten million tons of food at the base, unless the soldier could get his dinner served him at the front ? It is easy enough to land the food ; it is very difficult to distribute it. Let us see the process. The troops have done their march, and have reached the spot selected for their camp ; fatigue parties are told off—some to cut wood, some to dig kitchens, to carry water, to make shelters, to draw rations, etc. The quarter-master has taken this last party to the regimental waggons, and drawn thence the rations for the day, conveyed them to the kitchens, parcelled them out to company cooks, who cut them into squad messes, and each man gets his dinner. The emptied waggons, however, must replenish from somewhere, or a repetition of the process would see the end of the rations. In the meanwhile, the Army Service Corps column attached to each brigade, has been moving up some distance in rear. These waggons—called the supply column—have brought up one

more day's supply, by which are refilled the emptied regimental waggons. This empties the supply column, which, in turn, must replenish from somewhere. How? To realise it best, let us imagine the army is some sixty miles from its base, and picture to ourselves the work that is being done upon the road in rear.

Along this road are two long streams of traffic; one to the army, of full waggons—remember, we are here neglecting all but food—and one from the army, of empty ones.

The road is divided into easy stages, and on each length a certain number of men and horses work. The first batch leave the base, and draw their loaded waggons to the next station, leave them there, and return with empty ones brought down from the front; the next batch, who have brought down empty ones, now take these loaded waggons and draw them another stage, meet other empty waggons there and return with them; and so a system of relays is worked along the entire road, and each man returns at night to his own camp, while the horses have their heavy and their light work alternately.

By these relays a larger amount of food is brought up the line than is immediately wanted, and some fifty miles from the base an advanced magazine is formed, which becomes a secondary base for the army, and relays work thence as before. One short march from the army, wherever it may be, is the "advanced depôt," as it is called, being the head of all the moving stream in rear; and it is the business of those in charge to see that all is there that can be wanted. From this advanced depôt the supply columns—emptied, as we saw just now—reload, and move up to be once more utilised. And so the work goes on.

It sounds so easy as described; but great care, forethought, and power of organisation are needed to keep the many links of this living chain in order. Largely composed of the native element, officers, men, and animals—all strangers to each other, all has to be thrown into shape after war has been declared. Counted in war by thousands, the numbers maintained in peace are few; and the provision of the required numbers, and their organisation for ready action at short notice, is not the least of the many cares that fall to the lot of those responsible for these "workers behind the scenes."

THE SURREY SIDE.

"Now for Surrey side and railways," would be the cry as the busy little steamer from London Bridge Stairs came alongside the pier at Pau's Wharf. The railways are still there—noticeably there; they have made the Surrey side their own, as it were; but it is no longer of necessity that we cross the river to reach them. The mountain has obligingly crossed the river to Mohammed; and that great London Bridge Station—which was once the great point of departure and arrival for Continental traffic, and engrossed all the traffic with the South of England—has now somewhat fallen from its high estate.

But the Surrey side has an existence apart from railways. It has even a claim to be considered the real original London, which, as every schoolboy may be supposed to know, was placed by that eminent geographer, Ptolemy, on the south side of the Thames. For centuries, Southwark possessed a certain municipal organisation of its own, and, although its powerful, overpowering neighbour over the way eventually sat upon it and crushed the life out of it, and treated it as a conquered and subject community, yet it has always preserved, somewhat carefully hidden, a spark of its ancient fire.

But, as well as Southwark, there is Lambeth, which has a good deal to say as to the Surrey side; and Bermondsey, the land of leather, lower down; and neither of these great parishes is much visited by travellers, except those of a commercial line. The great lines of thoroughfare from the various bridges pass through the district without assimilating the network of small streets and crooked lanes that lie between; great railway depôts have cut asunder populous neighbourhoods and passed the sponge over their local traditions. Factories, timber-yards, breweries, flour-mills, black chimneys, and tall shot-towers occupy the whole foreshore of the river between Westminster Bridge and Blackfriars; and a district which, from its salient position on the river and from its unrivalled conveniences as a centre of traffic might be the pride and glory of London, is given up to be a kind of dust-hole and rubbish heap for its more wealthy and powerful neighbours.

If we make our way to the Surrey side, over Westminster Bridge, we come at once to what is, perhaps, the pleasantest part of

the whole range of shore: the river terrace which stretches from Westminster Bridge to Lambeth Palace, with the clustered buildings of Saint Thomas's Hospital aligned upon it. It is a pleasant walk, and always a quiet one, towards Lambeth, with the grandiose towers of the Palace of Parliament, its trim terraces and innumerable windows frosted round with traceries, looking down upon us. Close at hand we may see, through the railings, the lawns and gravel-paths of the pleasure-grounds of the hospital, where, if it be a warm, sunny day, patients may be seen taking in reviving draughts of the outside air. Beyond, there rises the dead-house, and a stretch of frosted windows signifies the dissecting-room, where poor mortality yields up its last secrets to the students' indifferent glance.

It is probable that this hospital of Saint Thomas may claim to rank as one of the earliest, and certainly the chiefest, of all the great hospitals of England. Its presence there upon the Albert Embankment is more or less of an accident. Originally, as everybody knows, it stood within a stone's throw of London Bridge, and formed a street of itself, Saint Thomas's Street, while just opposite was the hospital known as "Gay's," long famous for its medical schools. Originally the hospital of Saint Thomas was founded A.D. 1213, by Richard, Prior of Bermondsey, and dedicated to the famous English Saint, Thomas A'Beckett. The brethren of Saint Thomas were charged with the care of the sick poor of the neighbourhood, and when their house was closed, at the general dissolution of religious houses, forty beds: it was found had been constantly provided for poor, infirm persons. If any provision were then made for carrying out the benevolent objects of the foundation, they have escaped notice. It was sixteen years after, during the reign of Edward the Sixth, that the City Corporation entered into possession of the hospital, under a gift from the Crown, and fitted it up once more for its original purpose.

There the hospital remained for more than three centuries, renewed and enlarged from time to time. And then the South-Eastern Railway acquired the site for the extension of the London Bridge terminus, and the magnificent price obtained by the hospital authorities enabled them to build this handsome series of structures, in which the several wards occupy separate buildings, and are, as far as possible, isolated from

their surroundings. But to gain an idea of the work that the hospital is doing, one should seek the front to the Lambeth Palace Road, and the entrance for out-patients. And there, at the regulation hour, may be seen a great throng of people, all provided with bottles for their medicine. Buoy, anxious women, who take their visit to the hospital as part of the day's work; slatternly old dames; children wide awake and precocious; girls in service, carrying the door-key as an emblem of office; pale sempstresses, and sallow work-girls; all these form a crowd that has its cheerful elements, and seems moved by a spirit of camaraderie and good humour. The men are more gloomy and silent, they do not bear affliction so patiently, nor have they the same assuagement in talking over their ills.

Leaving the hospital, our way is towards the Palace; and here, in a neighbourhood somewhat gloomy and dingy, appears an inscription that arrests attention, "Paris Street." Why, this is the old Paris Garden! The name takes us back to the days of Shakespeare—aye, and earlier than those—even to the days of the Canterbury Pilgrims, and of Gower and the "Lover's Confession." For we first hear of the name in the reign of Richard the Second, when the Manor House was tenanted by one Robert de Paris. And there is extant an ordinance of the King directing the butchers of the city to bring thither their offal, to be consumed by the King's bears.

Now, who was this Robert de Paris living in this gloomy hold, close to the King's bear-pits, apart from every one, and yet within call of the Royal Palace! A horn blown on one of the towers of the Palace would be warning enough for Monsieur de Paris.

There we have the man, clearly enough. Robert de Paris is the King's executioner—an office of gloomy dignity not to be confounded with that of the common hangman of later days. And it is with these sinister associations that the history of Paris Garden begins. Then there were two baiting-grounds—rude, circular structures, fitted up with seats supported on rough scaffolding. "Those who go to Paris Garden, first pay one penny at the gate, another at the entrance of the scaffold, and a third for quiet standing." In Elizabeth's time, 1559, the French Ambassadors are, with much ceremony, conducted by water to Paris Garden to see the baiting

of bulls and bears. The popularity of this wretched sport is shown by an accident that happened in 1582, when the overcrowded scaffolding, contrived to hold a thousand spectators, gave way with a crash, and many were killed or wounded. It was on a Sunday, too, and afforded a text to many zealous preachers. The rude structures adapted for bear-baiting might without difficulty be made to do duty for playhouses; and in 1613, the year when the "Globe"—Shakespeare's house on Bank-side—was burnt down, we find Henslowe, who had the "Fortune" in Cripplegate, opening a summer theatre at Paris Garden.

The old Manor House of Paris Garden was a sequestered abode surrounded by a moat, and encompassed by a labyrinth of ditches, where might be found the rare hedgehog grass, as mentioned by Gerard in his Herbal. The house was well-known to the gallants of Charles the First's reign as Holland's leaguer, and is not seldom alluded to by the dramatists and playwrights of the period. It was a place of very doubtful reputation, as, indeed, was all the district of Lambeth Marsh. The near neighbourhood of the Archbishop had no effect upon the morals of the locality.

Then as now the meads and gardens of the Archbishop's palace formed an agreeable feature of the landscape, and the sombre Lollards' Tower, and Morton's handsome gateway of red brick, give distinction to the corner where Lambeth church stands under the wing of the Palace, in pleasant countrified dignity. Just beyond the jingling tram-cars are running, and from the comparative seclusion of the Embankment, and the precincts of the Palace, we pass into the full tide of life.

But let us rather retrace our steps, and begin again at the foot of Westminster Bridge, where there are more tram-cars ready to take us to Clapham, Stockwell, Brixton, Deptford, Greenwich, along the noisy, bustling Westminster Bridge Road. Here, in the very forefront of the panorama, comes Astley's, recalling vague associations of circus processions, triumphal displays, the humours of Mr. Merryman, and of an atmosphere redolent of the perfumes of saw-dust and orange-peel.

Such displays were in their infancy when Philip Astley, a light dragoon who had recently taken his discharge, having served in the wars of the Great Frederick,

and won the good opinion of his officers, set up a riding-school close by the foot of Westminster Bridge. According to tradition Astley found the piece of ground he wanted in the hands of an old man, who had a sort of poultry farm there, and reared pheasants for sale. Of this old man Astley purchased the lease of the ground, and enclosed the space with hoardings—the whole being open to the sky. This was about the year 1768, when equestrian entertainments were provided for the public on a very small scale. At suburban gardens, such as the "Three Hats" at Islington, where there would be a green surrounded by drinking boxes and summer-houses, circus riders could exhibit their feats, sending round the hat in the usual way after each performance. Astley himself began in this way in a field not far from the scene of his subsequent triumphs known as Glover's Halfpenny Hatch.

The beginning of Astley's fortunes was in a present from the commander of his old regiment of a charger, known afterwards as the Spanish horse, to which Astley had already taught a number of tricks. He would ungirth his saddle, wash his feet in a pail of water, set the tea-thing, take the kettle off the fire, with other amusing performances, which used to bring down the house—when the house first came into existence.

But it was not till 1780 that Astley managed to get a roof over his structure, the materials for which he obtained by an ingenious device. It had always been the privilege of the mob at each Westminster election to destroy and carry off piecemeal the temporary wooden hustings erected for the nomination. Astley induced a number of his retainers to mingle with the crowd, to take their share in the pillage, and to spread the intelligence among the mob that plenty of beer was waiting on the other side of the bridge for such as should present themselves not altogether empty-handed. The consequence was, that the Westminster hustings found its way almost bodily to Astley's riding-school; and presently a covered amphitheatre of wood, divided into pit, boxes, and gallery, sprang into existence.

This was not altogether a new idea of Astley's. An author of plays, of Charles the First's time, wrote bitterly of

"New amphitheatres to draw the custom from playhouses."

Horses had been introduced on the

stage, certainly in Pepys's time, who notices them, when Shirley's play of "Hyde Park" was revived after the Restoration. But Astley's notion of a mixed dramatic and equestrian spectacle took with the British public, and people began to throng towards the new Amphitheatre of the Arts—as Astley magniloquently named his wooden booth.

Success brought rivalry, and in 1782 was built the Royal Circus in the Blackfriars Bridge Road, which, after a chequered career, is now known as the Surrey Theatre. For the new place Charles Dibdin wrote the pieces, and as no license could be obtained, the concern was carried on without one. This ended in an unseemly contest with the authorities, in the course of which, on one occasion, the theatre was cleared by a troop of soldiers.

But Astley knew how to keep on the right side of authority. In Paris, at this time, he also had a show. The Lieutenant of Police gave him permission for horsemanship, but he was not to be allowed a stage on which to exhibit tumbling and other feats. Astley contrived a moveable stage, supported on the backs of horses, and thus evaded the prohibition, delighting large audiences, and securing a very successful season. The exhibition attracted the attention of Royalty, and young Astley was summoned to perform at Versailles before Louis the Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette.

Entirely a figure of the Surrey side is Philip Astley, at his lodgings near the circus, up three pairs of stairs, with Mrs. Connel, a widow, who, as "Mary," is always called into consultation upon important points of management. His dramatic authors, too, are of the Surrey side, such as Mulberry Stump, so named by Astley, as far as his Christian name goes, on account of his jolly red nose, and secondly because he had a wooden leg. Poor Stumpy is often in the Clink prison for debt, and has to be bailed out in order to finish his piece for the coming representation. Then there is Jemmy Decastro, comedian, comic singer, and mimic, who is always on the bills, and who eventually writes his manager's memoirs. Into all about him Astley infuses some of his own active, cheery spirit. "Who's Mr. Impossible?" he cries, when the stage-carpenter suggests the word, "he don't live in this house."

Some of Astley's sayings have become immortal. Such as his directions to his

author, "Cut the cackle, and come to the ossea." He was a terrible one for cutting and slashing, but with an instinctive eye to effects, to the broad effects of the amphitheatre. As when at a rehearsal he watches keenly a terrific broadsword combat. "This won't do," he cries, "we must have shields." Or when he addresses his musical composer, "Doctor, I want a tune for two broadswords, to-ro, tang-tang," thus indicating the motif of the melody.

A many-sided man, too, was Astley. An excellent performer in the water, he floated on his back, one day, holding a flag in each hand, from Westminster to Blackfriars. He built, too, a great wooden bathing shed by Westminster Bridge, where his patrons might take a header into the river; but this was never much patronised, and went to decay.

When war broke out with France, who but Astley was to the fore, ready to help in the embarkation of horses, and eventually joining his own old regiment as a volunteer? But he was recalled from the tented field by the news that his famous amphitheatre had been burnt down. This was in the autumn of 1794, and by the next Easter Monday a new and greatly improved amphitheatre was opened to enthusiastic crowds. At the entrance to this structure we find our Astley, in the year 1801, bestriding a barbed steed, and himself in full uniform, and surrounded by a brilliant retinue of all his chief performers. The occasion was the celebration of the Peace of Amiens, when the King made his Royal progress on horseback to Westminster. At the King's right hand rode the Duke of York, a great friend of Astley's, who greeted the manager's profound salutes with a friendly wave of the hand.

"Who's that, Fred?" asked the King.

"A veteran of the German War, and a good soldier," replied the Duke.

The King's condescending bow that followed sank deep into the circus-manager's heart.

"Jemmy, my boy, my sovereign did me the honour to bow to me. What do you think of that, my dear boy?"

Always, too, Astley was good to his old comrades of the army. There were seats reserved for soldiers, to which the uniform gave free admittance. Astley, joining his regiment, brings them over five hundred flannel jackets to keep them warm and comfortable, and in one of the corners of each of these jackets was sewn a shilling,

a delicate attention relished more by the bold dragoon, perhaps, than even the jacket itself.

Again, in 1803, just when Bonaparte had denounced the Treaty of Amiens, and laid an embargo on English visitors to France, Astley, who had been staying in Paris, looking after his little bit of property in the Rue Faubourg du Temple, where his circus had been, hears of his circus on the Surrey side as destroyed by fire. Prisons could not hold him after that, and he escaped across the frontier, and reached home to find the news too true; for on the second of September fire had destroyed every vestige of his amphitheatre.

Again, the Easter Monday holiday-keepers gathered uproariously at the opening of a new amphitheatre in the following year. But now it is young John Astley who takes the management, although his father declares that he will always have a horse in the team.

Soon after, through his influence at Court, Astley gets a license from the Lord Chamberlain for an amphitheatre on the other side of the water, and buys from Lord Craven, part of the site of old Craven or Bohemia House, at the foot of Drury Lane. And here he is at work building, during the year 1805-6, and he calls the new theatre, in allusion to the famous games he means to rival, the Olympic Pavilion. But his foot is no longer on the native heather, the famous Surrey side. The Olympic audiences are cold and scanty, and Astley gets out of the speculation by selling the place to Elliston, who migrates there from the old opposition house—the Royal Circus or Surrey Theatre.

But what was wasted in the Strand was reimbursed by the Surrey side. A great success was the "Siege of Valenciennes," a feat of arms, the fame of which has been dimmed by time, with real soldiers and real guns, and a charge of cavalry as a realistic episode of the siege. And a real startling Surrey side piece, effectively named the "Blood Red Knight," is said to have cleared eighteen thousand pounds for the lucky managers.

These palmy days long left their memories enshrined in the bosoms, not only of the Surrey-alders, but of all the country districts round about, and a visit to London would be no visit at all without one night at least at "Ashley's" to share in the thrilling scenes of stage and arena.

It was a strange accident that, after his long connection with the Surrey side,

Philip Astley should die in Paris, and be buried in Père Lachaise. His only son, who carried on the show, died in the same room exactly seven years after his father, and the name of Astley came to an end. Then Mr. Davis took the command. But from that time, with very short intervals, Astley's has always had something going on in the way of "osses."

For the rest the Westminster Bridge Road is not without interest in the living, moving panorama it presents, say from the top of a tram-car. The shops are always interesting with their devices to attract attention, and where from structural arrangements the shops are small and almost crowded out of the line, their efforts to assert themselves are attended with some degree of originality. There was one who wrote himself "Historic sign-writer to her Majesty." But dark, sombre, and cold are the narrow side-streets, where footsteps are rare, and a dull silence seems to reign. The main thoroughfare is crowded enough, stolid carters with waggons loaded with country produce block the way, and turn a deaf ear to the whistle of the tram-car driver. Omnibuses and cabs thread their way among the broad-wheeled waggons. A funeral checks the traffic for awhile, and on the side walk a man who has undertaken to walk from Croydon to Westminster Bridge, with a pot of fourpenny ale on his head, neither spilling nor sipping the same on the way, is received with cheers on the approaching completion of his task by a select knot of admirers.

But at night—let us visit this road at night, not by the pale moonlight, but in the foggy gloom of a bitter cold Christmas eve. The main road is quiet enough; people seem benumbed by the cold; the gas-lights burn dim, and the fog has crept into the shop windows and turned their brilliance into a yellow, sickly glow. Cold now and dreary to the very marrow-bones are the narrow, short streets that lead into the labyrinth of poor, mean tenements on either hand. But a sharp turn to the left brings us into a different scene. The street is called the Marsh, and it leads directly into the New Cut; and the foot-way on one side of the street passes between an avenue formed by the shops, mostly with open fronts, like booths, and the stalls, and sheds, and barrows of innumerable small traders. All along, the footway is crowded with a mass of people moving, without any order, in

opposite directions. Shopkeepers and stall-keepers vie with each other in cries that would be loud if they could, but which often end in a hoarse, croaking whisper. Here you may be weighed, like a jockey, with a ponderous beam and swinging gear, such as they use at Epsom and Goodwood—an appeal to the imagination of youth, which does not seem to boast any great success.

Then there is a barrow-load of snips, and fragments, and odds and ends of ribbons, with bits of lace, and fragments of dress materials; and next to this is a greengrocer's stall, loaded with cabbages, all thickly crusted over with ice and snow. Buy, buy, buy! shout all the frantic traders; but that is just what people don't do. Here and there may be a woman who has a purse with a little silver in it, who is ordering in her Christmas cheer most bountifully; but people in general confess themselves to be without money, and seem to find a melancholy kind of pleasure in proclaiming the fact. Yet there are temptations well within the reach of a humble purse. What do you say to green peas—hot green peas on Christmas Eve in the New Cut, served out in little saucers, all hot and only a penny?

"Come along, people!" This is the fierce, almost despairing cry of a stout, ruddy young fellow who sells potatoes, and who seems to resent the inattention of the crowd as a personal affront. The butchers are the most vociferous of the traders, but the grocers and cheesemongers run them hard for first place. The greengrocers rely more on persuasion, put on their most engaging manners and mellifluous tones. "Now, my dears, now, my sweets." One old dame is especially choice and honeyed in her epithets as she sees a possible customer approaching. "Come and buy, my lovely sweet, my precious dear, my dovey duck"; and, then, as hope fades away, the tone changes to, "Git along with you then, old Sally Brown."

As for the number of things you may get for a penny in the New Cut on a Christmas Eve, it can only be said that it includes all kinds of penny toys for the children, penny cooking utensils for the kitchen—in anticipation of the Christmas banquet, penny knives and forks for the friends who come to share the feast, penny pegs for their hats and coats, and penny mugs wherein to draw the creaming Christmas ale. Then there are bonnets and hats of sorts, all piled up pell-mell in

a cart, and some of these can be picked out for a penny, although others may run to quite high prices, and with flowers and velvet adornments often coming to as much as a shilling.

While all this hubbub and confusion is going on by the flaming lights of cressets and naphtha lamps, with hasty banquets of winkles at the corners of streets—those dim, gloomy, icy-cold streets that lead into the unknown—with occasional orgies of hot drinks in the way of cordials of promising, high-sounding names and brilliant colouring, the rest of the world seems to have gone home quietly to its own fireside. For this half-mile of market or fair, unchartered and unprivileged, comes to an end suddenly in the Blackfriars Road, which is black and dull enough, with the coloured lights of the tram-cars sailing to and fro in the darkness like ships at sea. And that way the river is soon crossed, where floes of ice innumerable are coming up with the tide, softly crackling as they strike each other or jostle against the piers of the bridge. And, as the City churches are beginning to sound forth their Christmas chime, we take our leave for the night of the Surrey side.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER XV.

How things would have gone at Oswaldburn Chase after that ill-starred day in Coaliquay, it is impossible to say, had not Fate, or Providence, intervened in the shape of a succession of so-called chances to put off the moment of reckoning. There was Colonel Blake first; it was impossible for Sir Everard to "have it out" with his wife in the railway carriage when the old fellow was chattering there, first on politics with Sir Everard, then discussing fashion and society with her ladyship.

"Not been to the opera!" he exclaimed, "no more have I, I must confess; but it is not expected of an old fellow like me. Now Treverton here is a young man, a newly married man; you are the very people the opera and the drama expect for patrons."

With Sir Everard sitting in his corner with such a tremendous frown upon his

face, it was hardly to be wondered at that Beatrix should answer, somewhat nervously :

"It is too far off for us. I hear it has been a success. Have you heard anything more of it?"

The anxious eyes with which she asked the last question stabbed Sir Everard through. He could hardly refrain himself from seizing her like any Whitechapel ruffian, and shaking confession out of her.

"Nothing, except that the prima donna is only fit for comedy opera, and that the lady, who styles herself Princess something or other, can neither sing nor act; but that the tenor is good enough."

Sir Everard was obliged to lean out of the window with some muttered excuse about the scenery. Nothing was visible but the lights here and there; but nobody noticed details and inconsistencies. Neither did Sir Everard and Beatrix in their pre-occupation notice how Colonel Blake kept his talk flowing on general subjects; how he never asked after Helena and her wedding, though he and she had been great friends since her babyhood.

"At least you saw the picture at Fisher's," he proceeded. "Holman Hunt's—I forgot the name—I always forget names. Curious idea, is it not?"

"I am ashamed to say I never thought of the picture. One never has time for pictures, running up for a day's shopping; especially in these short days."

"They have electric light for it. But ladies never do seem to find time for anything but shopping. Speaking of shopping, have you heard the last about the Kenyons? Mrs. Kenyon has a perfect craze for shopping; she buys all manner of expensive, useless things. She has nearly ruined the Deans. They do say he put a notice in the papers to say he would not be answerable for her debts; but that is not true. Great people like Deans do not condescend to make public scandals. They wash their dirty linen at home. He is a very proud man. It would simply kill him if he knew even that his wife's debts were matters of public discussion and amusement. Fancy laughing over five o'clock tea about a Dean's wife! It makes one's hair stand on end. They really had a joke about it in a burlesque last week at Coaliquay. Such is the penalty of greatness; 'of sinning on such heights.'"

The careless words were a revelation to Sir Everard. The enforced abatement from speaking on the subject nearest his

heart had given him time to recover from the shock, at least, sufficiently to consider. He had never thought of what the social consequences would have been had he followed his first impulse and made away with himself; if not under a train, at least, in one! He had never thought how a scandal on the stately heights of his position in the county would have become the property of every gossiping man or woman, ill-natured or good-natured. The latter would be the worst. He writhed at the idea of his most private affairs being discussed at all; but to be pitied, or laughed at, or accused—oh! that way madness lay, only to imagine it.

Could he then condone such an offence?

Certainly not; but the offence and its rebuke and punishment must be kept between himself and his wife. He must wash his dirty linen at home.

At Monkchester Station the Chase post-bag was put into the carriage, as was the custom when the carriage was in the town so late; the last train by the small branch line from Monkchester past Oswaldburn having gone two hours since, too early for the London letters. This more than provided an excuse for silence. Sir Everard was intensely anxious to hear from his lawyers. The reading-lamp in the brougham was strong and steady, the springs perfect, the road good. He opened the bag. It contained a number of newspapers, which he replaced, several letters, one of them from Mr. Key; one addressed to Lady Treverton, returned through the Dead Letter Office; one from a lady, bearing a coronet and "Carlaurie Castle" on the flap, which he put back into the bag with the remaining missives. Lady Carlaurie would always keep.

Beatrix opened her letter, and gave vent to a sharp exclamation of annoyance. It was the letter written a week ago to Mr. Edward Watson, at the office of the "Coaliquay Express."

Sir Everard did not hear, hardly saw the letter he had handed to her. Mr. Key's letter provided him with ample food for meditation. The newspapers were full of most unpleasant paragraphs; he sent copies of each of them to Sir Everard. Miss Treverton seemed to be quiet at present. He advised Sir Everard to wait a week before taking any steps. So far, there seemed nothing to fight against but mere gossip. If, in a few days' time, something more definite should transpire, it might be necessary to proceed against the

papers. The insinuations could hardly come from or through Miss Treverton, since she was the last person likely to want to rake up the Emily Stort affair; yet though one paper pointed more directly at Lady Treverton, he had heard, on good authority, that the other lawyers were on the supposed scent of an Emily Stort marriage, presumed to have taken place abroad after Lady Augusta's death.

"My girl! my girl!" groaned Sir Everard, in spirit. "How are we to stop her? To tell her the truth is impossible; it would kill her—or worse, it would estrange her from me for ever; and with perfect justice, for I have done her a terrible wrong. Heaven knows, I did it unwittingly, but it will come none the less heavily on her."

The drive was soon over, and he went straight to the library.

"I must make a clean breast of it to old Key," he told himself. "He will pull us through if any one can."

He wrote a very long letter; lengthy as to detail, lengthier in self-excuse and self-blame, lengthiest in prayers for assistance and demands for a favourable opinion. He told Mr. Key the story Mr. Cullingworth had told Helena that very day; adding the information that he had never suspected for a moment that Emily Stort had not been drowned in the wreck of the "Janet" until the month of August, 1870, five years after Lady Augusta's death, when he had had a few penitent lines of farewell from her, written from her deathbed in Nebraska. There was a postscript to the letter, added by a friend who had nursed her, saying that three days after the writing of the letter, Emily Stort, whom she had known as Mrs. Farish, had died, and was buried beside her supposed husband, Jacob Farish, in the new cemetery of Dodgeonville, Nebraska.

Sir Everard had kept the letter carefully locked away. It was, he believed, the one piece of existing evidence that would displace Helena from her position; but it was also evidence that no farther mistake could be made—that his first and lawful wife really was dead before his latest marriage. He sent it now to Mr. Key, piteously, helplessly, hopelessly asking for advice.

The first dressing-bell rang. In spite of shuddering reluctance to face so much as the servants, who must have heard or read something of these reports, much less to face Beatrix, who had piled misery, if not

dishonour, in doubled measure upon his stricken head, he must obey the summons and go to dine as if nothing were happening. All that lay in his power now was to give the lie to these disgraceful rumours by looking as if nothing were the matter; to act the part of a proud, stately gentleman, unassailable in his lofty distance from the common herd, with its vulgar attraction for mud and filth, its insensate bellowing at those who were not of its own mean kind.

Whatever might be the opinion of the butler and the two footmen who stood and moved about them with sphinx-like imperturbability, but who were as keenly observant as augurs watching for signs, Beatrix saw nothing wrong. She was full of her own plans for helping the Princess; she had already looked over her manuscripts, and written some notes for the continuation of her story. She was afraid Sir Everard found her absent-minded. It was so difficult to keep up a conversation before the servants when she felt so conscious of hidden matters, not to be revealed before them, and only to be revealed at a favourable time to Sir Everard.

She went to the drawing-room alone after dinner. Sir Everard said he had work to do in the library, and asked for some tea to be sent to him there. She was not surprised or uneasy; she only thought, "Then I shall have a nice quiet time to myself. Every hour is of importance when the money is so badly wanted."

The first thing he saw on returning to the library was Lady Carlaurie's letter. He opened it. She might tell him something about Helena.

"Dear Everard," he read, "I am so shocked and distressed. Do you know what dreadful things there are in all the papers about your wife? They say she was a married woman when you married her. We always knew there was something bad. It is terrible for poor Helena; and I need not say how keenly we feel the slight cast on Augusta's memory by your rash marriage. These sudden, secret things always turn out like this. I am afraid it will be the end of the Monkchester wedding. Of course the dreadful creature is not with you now——"

There was more, but he hardly read it. Had his wife's name already become inalienably public property? He read the newspaper paragraphs again in this new light. Key's letter had put glasses before

his eyes, coloured by his own guilty conscience, which caused him to see himself, rather than his wife, the possible weak link in the marriage bond.

His wife! He had been jealous, suspicious; he had believed—no, only almost believed, he tried to think—that Montefalco was an old lover whom she did not sufficiently discourage. Discourage! Why, was it not shameful enough that his wife—his wife—might once in her life have allowed such a man to aspire to her, or even to admire her? Was it not beyond all bearing that she should so much as speak to him? And how had he seen her speaking to him? With far more than friendship in her face, with earnest pleading, with lifted, tender eyes, apparently with low, tremulous tones!

Had he not almost gone mad with the suspicion that this old lover might have some hold over her! that perhaps she had once loved him! that some old girl-love, fed by romance, might not have quite died out! But this dreadful thing that Lady Carlarie said—

Married! Oh, it was impossible! She could not have deceived him with those honest eyes.

Then he remembered, with a shock of agony, that seemed to shake the world away from under his feet, how it was possible to deceive, and be deceived, at once. Had he not himself so deceived Helena's mother! Had she been married to Montefalco, and believed herself a widow until she met him, and he remembered her startled eyes, her shrinking, her fear, that day in the hotel garden at Bigorre!

His brain was sick and dizzy; he dared not look back; he dared not think. Yet he sat there, thinking, and looking back, while the slow night hours marched on. The silence of midnight came to the house. Bolts and bars were in their places; the servants had all gone to bed. He might have sat there all the night through, had he not been startled by a sound—the soft, cautious shutting of the drawing-room door.

Burglars! It was exactly two o'clock, the very time for them! He seized the poker and rushed out of the room, straight upon his terrified wife, who had just reached the staircase.

"Beatrix!"

"Everard! What a fright you gave me!" she gasped.

He did not know what she had seen in

his face; the murderous fury meant for the burglar; the amazement; the maddened suspicion that followed. Her terror seemed the terror of guilt.

"You are late," he cried, roughly. "Where have you been? What have you been doing?"

"You are late too. I have only been in the drawing-room. I did not know it was so late."

"You must have been very pleasantly occupied."

Poor girl! She blushed violently. Was it possible he could guess! She stammered:

"I had a book. I am tired and sleepy, and my head aches."

She went slowly upstairs, carrying the candle she had taken from the hall table. He stood watching her; the light flickering on the broad, oak balustrade, on the pictures, on her tall figure in the sweeping black velvet dress, whose lengthy train hung down the stairs behind her, making her seem as weirdly tall as a black shadow. Then he shut himself again into the library.

The consequence of her late work was that she slept until ten next morning. A note was on her dressing-table—an envelope holding a mere scrap of paper.

"Going to London on business, by first train. E. T."

Business! On Sunday! And there had not been a hint of such a thing last night.

She asked her maid when Sir Everard had gone.

"He had a great deal of business to do last night," she said, with a grand assumption of carelessness and knowing all about it, which did not deceive the maid for a moment. "He was going to work very late in the library, but he hoped he need not go up to town until Monday."

She was told that Sir Everard had rung up William the groom at about half-past two; that he had been driven to Coaliquay to catch the 6 30 train to King's Cross.

It was very strange and uncomfortable. Beatrix went to the library to find a Bradshaw. Was there any later train he might catch if he missed the 6 30? Could he possibly catch it in the limited time?

She found there was no other, and that the journey, usually performed in six hours, was lengthened on Sundays to twelve hours and twenty minutes. He could not reach King's Cross until 7.50. It must have been very urgent business

indeed that took him by a Sunday train.

She looked round to find some clue to the reason of such a penitential discipline as twelve hours and a half of incarceration in a train on a cold November day, added to a sleepless night, and a drive that could only be accomplished by the swiftest, strongest horses in three hours. She saw the grate full of grey ashes of paper. Had he been burning the midnight oil over literary work, like herself? On the tiles beneath she found a half-burned envelope. She did not know the writing, but she saw the coronet and "Carlaurie Castle" on the flap.

"It is something about Helena's wedding," she concluded, with a sense of immense relief, only mitigated by fear lest Helena might be making herself a little more unpleasant than usual. "I shall have plenty of time for my story," she thought, delightedly.

She worked hard at it all the week. It occupied her mind so fully that she felt only the very slightest surprise and uneasiness that there should be no news from Sir Everard. It was so nice to have the time all to herself. She had no visitors: but neither was that extraordinary, since everybody had called so recently. On the Friday the novel was finished.

"It must not go in the post-bag," she considered; "somebody would see the address who knew it came from here, and nobody must know until I tell Everard. I will take it to Coaliquay to-morrow; that will be something to do. There is a morning concert with Sarasate. I will go to that, and see the picture at Fisher's."

She went to Coaliquay, posted her parcel, looked at the picture, lunched, and heard Sarasate, all with a delicious sense of stolen pleasure, of truant schoolgirl enjoyment. She went to the station in time to catch a train that would take her to Oswaldburn. The first person she saw on the platform was Sir Everard.

"Good Heavens! What are you doing in this place?" he exclaimed, below his breath.

"I was all alone, so I came to hear Sarasate, and to do other things," she answered, bewildered by his manner, her natural truthfulness impelling her to add the last words.

All his suspicions rushed back upon him. What was old Key's advice; what were the seemingly satisfactory answers to the enquiries they had made during the past week;

what was his slowly gained back confidence compared with the visible fact of her embarrassed manner, of all the secrets and mysteries that hung about her!

This time he managed to secure a private compartment. It was an express train, that did not stop between Coaliquay and Monkchester.

"Beatriz," he said, sternly, as soon as they had started, "what took you to Coaliquay to-day?"

She looked frightened and confused, his eyes were so fierce, fixed upon her with the intensity of a grand inquisitor. She was obliged to stammer:

"I have wanted to tell you before, I ought to have done so; but I was afraid. You have such very old-fashioned ideas about women."

"Old-fashioned!" burst in angry scorn from his lips. "I fear my ideas are old-fashioned! Women no longer wish to be modest, pure, and docile, like their mothers. Old-fashioned! Good Heavens!"

"There is nothing immodest in it," she returned, indignantly. "It is only prejudice. Everybody does it now; the greatest ladies in the land—even queens write books."

"Write books!" he repeated, puzzled.

"Which you think such a degrading occupation for a woman—immodest, unwomanly, conceited."

"That entirely depends upon the books—their style, the object for which they are written," he answered, feeling bound to stick to his colour.

"Well, I don't set up to rival Royalty in style, though the critics have said very nice things of me. As for an object, what object can one have better than to make an honest living or to benefit some good cause?"

"What in the world are you talking about? What have critics said of you?" he asked, alarmed, thinking that some paper must have taken up the cudgels on her behalf. Save him from such friends!

"Nothing but good. But, dear, believe me, I would not have deceived you had you not frightened me a little at first by your stern ideas."

"Stern ideas! Beatriz, explain this. You say you have a confession to make that ought to have been made before. Don't be afraid of me. Nothing would make me angry but mystery; at least, I hope not." He paused; her cheeks were burning, her eyes dropped down. "Tell me at once," he cried, with a new rush of

impatience, "who is that Italian—Montefalco? What have you to do——"

He stopped, for she had looked up in such utter astonishment. Her eyes met his straight, and before them his shifted uneasily in sudden shame.

"Mon'efalco!" she repeated, amazedly. "What in the world has made you think of him?"

"I will tell you, if you will tell me exactly on what terms you stand with him."

"Terms! With Montefalco!" she cried, indignantly. "How should I be on terms of any sort with a person like that? Everard, are you mad?"

"Very nearly," he returned, miserably.

"Montefalco!" she went on, indignation growing, her eyes blazing with outraged pride. "How dare you even mention his name in connection with mine?"

"You seemed to think him worthy of such an honour and more, a week ago," returned her husband, bitterly. "I saw you, Beatrix. I saw you talking with him confidentially in the station portico. I saw your farewell, your eyes full of—oh! I don't know what! It nearly drove me mad!"

"Really, Everard, I could almost laugh at you for being so silly! You are worse than a boy of twenty. If you would let me speak, and not interrupt, I mean to tell you the whole story—of Montefalco and everything else."

"I cannot wait to hear a long story," cried Sir Everard, distractedly. "Tell me at once—who is Montefalco? How did he claim you as an old friend at Bigorre? And why did it startle you so to see him?"

She made a little pause, then looked at him straight, clear-eyed.

"He once gave me singing lessons," she said, gravely. "He fell in love with me; I cannot imagine why, for I never thought of him except as a singing-master. I told my father, and he stopped the lessons. That was all—every word."

"But still you speak to him—walk with him," he moaned.

She laughed. She could laugh now in the relief of having told so much of her story.

"That is an episode in the other tale which you keep stopping me from telling. You remember the poor Princess Castelluca at Bigorre, and how she asked me to take a box during their season at Coaliquay? I met her accidentally last Satur-

day in Whyte Street, and went into her hotel with her. She has been very unfortunate, and I felt it was partly my fault. I promised myself—not her—to help her, but I could not do it with your money, as you did not approve; so I wrote a novel, and took it to-day to post at Coaliquay, and there will be a big cheque coming for it presently that will quite put her straight again. That is all."

"You wrote a novel!" ejaculated Sir Everard, in a tone far from complimentary to his wife's abilities.

"I have written lots of novels," she answered, penitently; "I lived upon them until I knew you. I had to live somehow, you see. Do forgive me, Everard; I won't do it any more, unless you say I may. I won't expect you to read them."

"But Montefalco?"

"I met him, and I let him walk to the station with me that he might tell me how to help the Princess—how her affairs really stand. She is too proud and refined to tell me herself."

"Is your name printed on the novels?" he asked, as new horrors presented themselves in succession.

"My dear Everard, no! I assure you the name of Laura Tigar brings much more fame and money with it than Lady Treverton would do!"

"Laura Tigar! Oh!"

"And now, dear, confession is made; it is time for absolution."

CHAPTER XVI—AND LAST.

"I DO not believe it," Helena told herself as firmly as she told Mr. Cullingworth. "It is a cleverly trumped-up story; but as we know from cases like the Tichborne case that there can be endless litigation and expense over the wildest impostures, it will be advisable to buy the man off. Find what he will take to hold his tongue, and give up his forged certificates, and I will find the money. My uncle will be only too glad to help me for my mother's sake."

"It is possible, of course, that it may be a fraud," admitted the lawyer, who did not see why some of the Carlarie hush-money should not go into his pocket; "but my advice is, fight it out in the Courts. It will be no more expensive in the end, for the black-mailing you will be otherwise subjected to will be simply unlimited."

Helena agreed to think about it.

A few days later, thought was scattered

to the winds. She had a letter from Lord Monkchester, saying, that as unpleasant rumours had reached him concerning the Treverton family, it would be better that the marriage should be put off farther until those rumours were effectually silenced. Helena read between the lines; her lover had heard of the scandal, and had consequently thrown her over.

Like a wounded tigress she flew to the battle. She would clear her name, and would scatter her enemies in confusion. She rushed to Mr. Callingsworth, and bade him set in motion the mighty machinery of the law.

He was engaged, and she must wait. She sat in the outer office, champing, chafing. Then she thought she recognised a voice in the private office—her father's. With every nerve set and strained she listened, but she could hear no more; nothing until the summons that her turn had come. Mr. Callingsworth was at liberty.

He was alone, looking very solemn, very sympathetic. Had she imagined that other voice? She glanced round. There was another door to the private office.

After a little dry preamble of words as meaningless as the chords a performer strikes on a piano before beginning to play, the lawyer said:

"Sir Everard Treverton and Mr. Key, of Larrock and Key, have just been with me on the subject of this case."

She turned very pale; then said, coldly: "And have they offered better terms than I?"

"I am afraid they have given me information that makes it impossible to proceed."

There was a pause. He was accustomed to criminals of all colours—forgers, perjurers, burglars, dynamiters, murderers—but his heart quailed and his blood grew cold before the fierce eyes transfixing him now.

"It is most painful," he said, nervously; "but you must know it. Sir Everard

admits the marriage with Emily Stort in 1863. Mr. Key has proofs of its perfect legality. It would be of no use whatever to proceed, as you must see."

"But I can proceed," she cried, in a frenzy. "It was bigamy, it was a criminal act, his marriage with my mother—it must be punished."

"No; he believed his first wife to be dead. He could not be prosecuted."

Was she going mad? the lawyer wondered. He hoped she would. There seemed no other way out of it, no other way of saving her the agony.

But she did not go mad altogether, though for a few months she was hardly accountable for her actions, and had to be carefully watched under restraint. For a few months she writhed and shrieked under the torture of fires she had drawn down from heaven by her impious hand. Then she awoke from the terrible nightmare; from the wasting of flames that had not purged her, nor shown her light; awoke, but not to sorrow, not to love—not even to repentance.

Sir Everard was very kind to her. He would fain have had her live at the Chase, and be still Miss Treverton, and had done his best for her sake, not his own, to hush the whole matter up; but that would have been impossible for her. After much persuasion she accepted the handsome settlement he made upon her, but she refuses to call herself by his name. She calls herself Miss Sinclair, and lives in a pension abroad.

And Beatrix reigns unmolested at the Chase, happy, loved, and loving. And the Princess with her boys is there just now on a visit, and she no more cheats them, and offends Sir Everard by her imitation jewels. She wears real diamonds, and silk brocades and velvets, and looks every inch a real princess, though when her visit is over she is to sing at a theatre; but at a salary far beyond her dreams, and, alas! still farther beyond her merit as an artist! And she has no idea who really pays the inefficient piper.

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By "RITA."

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

"AH! PARTING WOUNDS SO BITTERLY."

He stopped and faced me as he said those last words, and I looked up and met his eyes, pale and apprehensive with fear:

"If this," I said, steadying my voice with an effort, "if this is what you feel, Douglas, there remains only one thing to be done—you must go away; you are right in that decision. It is not safe, or wise, or honourable to be here. Oh," and a sudden wave of hopelessness and bitterness seemed to break over me, sweeping aside all prudence and self-control—"oh, why did you come with us at all; things were bad enough before, but now——"

"I thought you did not care any longer, that you did not feel, that it would be easy to play the part I had set myself; but oh, Athole, there never was a day or night I saw your husband speak to you, kiss you, take your arm in his possessive fashion, that I did not feel as if I were going mad. If I could have killed him—you—myself——"

"Hush," I entreated.

"I must speak—I will speak. It is the last time, Athole, I promise you, Surely there is some excuse. One can't always be bound hand and foot by conventionalities. If ever any one has repented and regretted an error of youth, I have done so. I often think that if you had only forgiven me that day when I asked

you, if you had only seemed to pity me, or feel sorry for me, all would have been different. I did not think you could have put this barrier between us. I did not think you were the sort of girl to make a loveless marriage, however attractive or however persuaded. But I was wrong."

I was silent. It seemed somewhat strange to hear him condemning my actions when he had been the cause of so much suffering to me. I listened, letting my thoughts drift to and fro while I steadied myself to seem indignant, and hurt, as indeed I was.

"Is any woman to be believed," he went on? "They are all false at heart, it seems to me. Even Penryth has not escaped their invariable treachery and faithlessness. His life has been utterly spoiled for him. A woman is only faithful when you are by her side—her slave and adorer; leave her, for ever so brief a space, she listens to the next voice, lends herself to the next flatterer; forgetfulness is so easy to her. Her nature is small, and small things content it. When a man loves he stakes heart, soul, life on that love. But he doesn't parade it to the world, or make a fuss about it, and the woman doubts him."

"You are talking at random," I said, quietly. "You cannot, with any truth, blame me for what has happened, and you know it very well. I will not deceive you. I will not say that I am happy. This must be the last time that the subject is discussed between us, and I can afford to be perfectly frank. No doubt, if I could have my time over again, I would act differently, I would not marry as I have done. But it is too late now for regrets, as I told you before, and I do not think it is manly, or—or even kind of you to bring these ac-

cussions against me. Whatever I have done I owe to you; I gave you all that was best in me—my youth, my love, my trust. You know how I was rewarded. Why do you try to blame me now for any pain you suffer? I do not justify my marriage; but, at least, I was under no obligation to you. I was free to make it, and a thousand and one circumstances will sometimes entangle a girl into my position. She hardly knows herself how it all comes about. Your own act had parted us. Had you even said—”

“I said all I dared, that day we parted, and you were so hard and cruel to me. Even then, some vague idea of winning fortune and fame and laying them at your feet was in my mind. I did not speak of it. I knew I had placed myself in a false position, and women, young, and innocent, and romantic as you were, Athole, are far more exacting than those of older years.”

“You ought to know,” I said, bitterly, “you tried both.”

“Will you never forgive or excuse that old folly?” he cried, passionately. “If you only knew how ridiculous it seems to me that you should ever let it trouble your memory for a single moment.”

“I only know the change it brought,” I said, wearily. “I only know how I suffered for what you think an ‘excusable folly.’”

He was silent for a moment. We were still walking on up the steep and hilly path, the leaves above our heads all gold-streaked by the sun, the murmur of a stream coming softly to our ears as it flowed unseen under cover of tall ferns.

He stopped suddenly, and took my hand in both his own, forcing me to look up into his face.

“It is best for me to go,” he said, “I ought never to have come on this yachting cruise; but Penryth was so keen about it. However, it will be easy to make some excuse—my father’s health—certainly that is no fiction, and I will take the steamer back from here. Huel can go on with you to Oban. He and the Laird seem the best of friends. Indeed, I am the only marplot to the party! No one will miss me, or care, and I shall stay at Inverness until Huel joins me, then I am going with him to his Cornish home; and after that I suppose we shall be off to Australia again. I—I—have no wish to remain in Scotland now.”

The slight emphasis on the “now” told me all that was necessary. The dull ache

of my own heart answered him in silence. I could find no words which were not self-betraying.

The last time—the last time—that was all I could think of! The last time to stand face to face—the last time to hear his voice speaking without the cold and formal restraint which it always held in the presence of others!

The last time! Yes, it had come to that, as I might have known it would come. Who can play for ever at friendship and decorum, when love cries out for answer? I acknowledged it now; and I thought to myself, that the wisest and bravest thing Douglas had ever done, was this sharp and resolute severance from the peril he foresaw, and the deception to which we had unwittingly drifted.

My hands lay passive in his clasp. How still it was upon this quiet hill-side. How soft the hazy sky looked through the dark green boughs. What a dreamy spell breathed in the quiet air that seemed to wrap us in its peace and perfume, and bid our tired hearts rest, and vex themselves no more.

But that was not to be.

Youth’s follies and mistakes had yet to exact their full meed of penance. Rest was a long way off on the journey of life.

“Why don’t you speak?” said Douglas, suddenly. “You look so white and strange. What is it? I cannot flatter myself that you care very much; my absence will be a relief I have no doubt.”

“It is the best thing you could do,” I said, with an effort.

“How coldly you say that; it is nothing to you if my heart breaks—nothing to you if life becomes a daily torture.”

“Oh, Douglas—Douglas!” I cried, breaking down at last. “Why do you tell me this now—now, when it is so useless, so vain, so wrong! Surely you might be brave enough to leave me in peace. Heaven knows, you have given me enough misery to bear.”

“Not more than you have given me.”

He dropped my hands—and turned aside abruptly. He seemed to be doing battle with himself and some feeling which he knew to be unworthy.

“I—I meant to ask you something when I followed you this morning,” he said, at last, his voice low and strained, as if he feared its natural force might betray more emotion than was desirable. “But I will not do it now. After all, I have no

right to add to your unhappiness. I think you will soon forget—I hope so, though I know your memory is a faithful one."

"It does not matter," I said, "whether I forget soon or late—you have pretended to think me faithless. But, I should like to know, what was it you followed me to say this morning?"

The blood flushed dusky to the roots of his brown hair.

"Do not ask me—I should be ashamed to tell you. Perhaps the dawn, the silence, the beauty here has brought purer thoughts and feelings than the fevered dreams and desires of night. I don't want you to think worse of me than you do. And if you knew what was in my mind——"

"Then you did not follow me only to say you were going to leave us," I said, as he paused.

"If you will know," he said, then suddenly held his breath, and looked away from me to where the sea lay flushed and warmly bright under the fuller glory of the risen sun.

"I came to tell you," he went on, brokenly, "that I had read you better than you read yourself; that I know how empty and joyless your life is; that I, too, am weary of this aching longing. Oh, Athole, if you knew what my love for you has become—a raging fever, a torture that never ends. There are times when only to feel your arms around me, the touch of your lips on mine—as—as once I felt them, I would gladly die; and if you felt that, too—if you knew half the agony of longing, and passion, and self-reproach that your every word and look can bring, you would not wonder that I should say to you what—what I meant to say, Athole, an hour ago!"

I drew back. I felt the blood ebbing slowly from face and lips; I felt cold and stunned, and bitterly ashamed.

"Did you think you had not wronged me enough, Douglas?" I said.

The old fierce light of anger leaped into his eyes.

"Have I not told you that to see you, meet you, be near you day by day was a harder task than I could school myself into learning? The sweetness of every moment was an hour of bitter agony. I—I wondered if you guessed or shared my unhappiness. I hated you often for giving me such pain, and for your own quiet unconsciousness of it. Was it always—unconsciousness, Athole?"

I shook my head.

"As you suffer now, Douglas, so I suffered in the past. I told myself that for love that died the death of unworthiness there could be no possible resurrection, and yet it was harder to kill than I imagined."

"Your husband does not love you as I love you," he cried, with sudden passion. "Oh, my darling, my darling, do not look at me like that! I am wrong—mad, if you will; but let me speak just this once; never shall word or prayer of mine trouble you again."

"It is dishonourable to listen to words like these, Douglas, and you know it."

"It would be if I had been nothing in your life before, if I wooed you only as the wife of another man; but I loved you first, Athole, and you—say what you will—he is not to you what I am."

"What you were, Douglas."

"I deserve the rebuke. Well, this is our third parting. It is right, it should be final. When the seas are between us again——"

His voice broke; he turned away. I saw his chest heave; I saw the shudder of the strong, young frame.

Everything seemed to grow dark around me; a wave of passion and regret swept over my heart, and all and everything was forgotten for one brief moment save that wild, ill-fated love which had worked such havoc in both our lives.

"It is harder than I thought," he said, hoarsely, and turned suddenly to me.

"Is it 'good-bye,' Athole—or——"

I interrupted him passionately.

"It is good-bye, it must be. Why do you torture me so?"

"You don't know what I bear. I suppose you don't care, either. If—if you did——"

"Yes?" I said, growing suddenly cold, and lifting steady, searching eyes to his.

"Don't look at me like that, Athole—as if you hated me, as if all the past was nothing."

"It is nothing now, Douglas."

He drew a long, deep breath.

"I don't believe you, I can't. A woman doesn't change so suddenly. Listen—listen—— No, don't turn away; I will hold you to my heart and tell you all that is there, though I die for it. Oh, my darling, why are you so cruel? I want you, and you want me. Let us end this misery once for all!"

His strong arms held me, his lips

touched mine. Wildly I looked around as if seeking some way of escape. There seemed to me something cowardly in those wild words, this forced embrace, and my only feeling was one of repulsion and indignation.

"Let me go!" I cried. "I will not listen. Do you hear? I will not! I hate you!"

His arms dropped to his side; he looked at me as if I had struck him—every drop of blood gone from his face.

"Heaven forgive you if you mean that," he said.

But I only wrenched myself away, and flew as if my feet were winged down the steep hillside, nor ever rested or drew breath till I was in my own room, and could fling myself, sobbing and exhausted, on the bed. Indignation and remorse raged wildly through my mind; I could not think clearly or calmly.

It seemed as if a great black gulf had yawned suddenly at my feet, and in that shuddering horror I recognised the peril to which I had blindly stumbled.

I knew now why he had followed me, what he had meant, and yet not quite dared to say. This was his love—to shame me in my own eyes, and in the eyes of all who had ever loved or cared for me. And I—oh, how I had loved him, thought of him, suffered for him!

A hot flush of agonised shame covered my face, scorching even the tears that had burst tempestuously forth.

"I am rightly served," I said, to myself, springing from the bed as suddenly as I had thrown myself down, and pacing to and fro the little narrow chamber, like a caged animal. "I might have known what would be the end, what sort of thing a man's love is. Oh, why was I so foolish; why did I betray that I still cared, that I had not forgotten! What must he have thought of me to hint even at such a thing as—~~as~~—"

But not even to myself could I say it.

I threw myself down on my knees, my whole frame was throbbing with tearless sobs.

"Keep him from me—oh, Heaven!" I prayed, wildly, "if there is Heaven or help for the weak and the tempted, keep him from my life for ever—now!"

A knock at the door made me rise to my feet. A voice, the Laird's voice, was speaking. How kind, and strong, and honest a sound it had!

"Athole, my dear, we're waiting breakfast. Are ye no ready?"

CHAPTER IV. FETTERS AND FANCIES.

It is a beautiful clear night, and the full moon is pouring down a flood of silver splendour over the bay and the dusky island of Kerrara.

Here and there the green or red lights of a passing boat flicker on the greenish water. Behind the little town of Oban the tall and sombre hills are touched with a cold, grey haze, the houses look white as marble as they front the shore.

We are all sitting on deck, and drinking in the quiet beauty of the scene. The night is very still, save for the lapping of the water against the sides of the yacht, or the splash of an oar as a boat passes us, and glides into the silence of the bay. The sound of the sea is only a murmur haunting the air from far-away shores, and its monotonous plaint holds a melancholy significance as it rises and falls on the hushed calm of the summer night.

"It is very beautiful," I hear the girls say, even their bright chatter subdued for once.

"It is more than that," answers Huel Penryth's voice, "it is as wonderful and solemn as a dream. Nothing looks quite real in this wonderful white light. The town is like a fairy's city; the night seems full of far-off echoes. It is a night for music and poetry, they alone express what one feels."

"Is it not a grand sight?" breaks in the Laird's voice. "Show me the equal in any of your foreign countries."

He has a big pipe in his mouth, a Glen-garry cap on his head, his hands are in his pockets, and he stands there, bluff, sun-burnt, hearty—truly the very antithesis of the "poetry" of the scene that Huel Penryth suggests.

I dislike pipes intensely, a man may look picturesque in almost any garb, and under almost any circumstances, and a cigar or a cigarette will not detract from such picturesqueness; but a pipe—it is vulgar, it is commonplace, it is objectionable to sight and smell. It seemed to me to mar the picture and destroy the harmony of the whole scene.

If a woman's tastes and instincts are being perpetually offended, and she is obliged to keep silence, it must have a harmful effect upon her nature in course of time. It is not the great troubles and trials of life which are so destructive of temper, patience, and forbearance as the

perpetual discordance, and unsuitability, and jarring discomfort of smaller evils which are perpetually recurrent, and which have to be "put up with" for sake of peace and quietness. It is on these smaller rocks that so many matrimonial ships have foundered; it is often from some pebble of triviality thrown into the waters of that most uncertain harbour that the ever-widening circles of discord, impatience, and intolerance have spread.

If ear and eye and sense are being perpetually offended, if taste is perpetually outraged, it stands to reason that our temper must suffer in due course; yet such offences are not counted as wrongs, though they are productive of harm. Often the mere want of courage to speak of them as "offensive" leads the sufferer to brood silently and sullenly over them in secret, a dangerous and unwholesome plan, and one which rather increases than remedies the evil. Yet, where is the man who would not be offended and astonished if his wife said, bluntly:

"Such and such a habit of yours annoys and irritates me beyond endurance. I know you are honourable, upright, affectionate, an admirable father and husband; but, oh! if you only did not smoke that odious pipe, or would not wear those creaking boots, or would not eat and drink so noisily, or kiss me with lips still wet from that last brandy and soda, or wear clothes that are an insult to taste, and an aggravation to sight, if you would only remember that the same delicacy and reverence given to the girl you wooed would be equally appreciated by the woman you have wedded, then we might still be happy; as it is——"

If men and women expect to live out a course of wedlock in perfect happiness and mutual confidence they expect nothing short of a miracle. In ninety-nine out of every hundred cases the mere empty shell is all that is left. Disappointment, disillusion, disgust. Yet how well we all mean to begin—and perhaps do begin. It is the living up to that beginning that is so hard, and after a time lapses into mere habit and endurance, though none of us are truthful enough to say so. The very hopelessness of rebellion, the very impossibility of speaking out frankly and honestly will sometimes mar and ruin a nature more weak than wicked, and it finds itself drifting into hypocrisy from sheer inability to grasp the nettle of offence. If we were but brave enough to be

truthful to each other from the first; and yet perhaps, the confession of disappointment, the implied rebuke, the stab to self-pride, the avowal of a detected weakness would lead only to anger or be held as unjust.

The armour of our vanity is a close and curious network, and we like no shaft to penetrate it. So we drift apart, till the old pitiful tale is all that is left to tell—a broken heart, a ruined home, another life that signs itself "manqué," and drifts on a sea of error to the dark rocks of shame and retribution beyond.

So far, so swiftly had my thoughts run when Huel Penryth's voice sounded by my side again.

"Mrs. Campbell, I have addressed you three times; what are you dreaming about in that absorbed manner?"

I started. I had forgotten place and surroundings. The girls were at the other end of the little vessel leaning over to watch the reflections in the clear water. The Laird and his friend were with them.

"I am afraid I was rather in the clouds," I said, "and it all commenced about—well, could you guess? Try."

"It had something to do with smoke," said Penryth, "I am sure of that because I was watching your face when your husband was speaking, and—it was expressive."

I laughed as I met his glance.

"You are right. I must confess a dislike to pipes."

"Why not say so?"

"What use? It is a habit of years. I, who have only lately appeared on the scene, cannot ask such a sacrifice. I hate to see a man making a martyr of himself, and it is always apparent."

"You have learnt that the trivialities of daily life make a goodly sum in its arithmetic; I wonder we ever let any habit get the mastery of us. It is such a mistake—but we do."

"Few of us are wise enough or strong enough to become philosophers like yourself."

"I am not that, I might parody Shelley, and say, 'I have learnt in suffering what I preach in words.' I have never looked upon myself as a person likely to win or desire sympathy. My childhood was lonely, my youth was wrecked in its very first years by treachery. These are hard lessons. We are malleable, when the blows of Fate fall sharp and strong, and mould us

for good or ill ; when we take shape it is not possible to alter. We may break ; but we never lend ourselves to the modeller's touch again."

I looked at him with the interest that he never failed to arouse in me.

"Did you know," I asked, with sudden timidity, born of that strange, fierce look of his, "that Douglas Hay left me his journal to read, the journal he kept through all that time you were together ? I seem to know you so much better since I read it."

He looked somewhat disturbed.

"I did not know," he said. "The lad is a good lad ; but foolish and headstrong, and very passionate. I am not sorry he left us," he went on, lowering his voice. "I could see where he was drifting, I wonder others were not equally keensighted."

"You mean—you mean——" I stammered, growing very pale as I met his eyes.

"I mean the Laird ; of course, I know full well how little use it is warning people ; but, indeed, I have often tried to speak to you. May I ? Will you promise not to be offended ?"

"Yes," I said, feeling too subdued for resistance.

"Well, I could more than guess at the secret of Douglas Hay's abrupt departure. Perhaps you yourself do not know how you have altered since. Oh, I know you are brave, and you try your best to hide your wounds ; but, all the same, you cannot always hide what you suffer from them. I want to be a friend to you, I want to help you, but I feel very powerless. If I told you that the Laird—that your husband guessed something of this, what would you say ?"

"Surely, surely you are mistaken !" I cried, in dismay. "Oh, I hope he does not. What would he think ?"

"Perhaps," said Huel Penryth, gently, "he would take it more sensibly and kindly than you imagine. He cannot but feel that you were a mere girl when you married him. He could not but acknowledge that Douglas Hay was attractive, strangely attractive to women. Youth turns to youth ; it is only natural. No, I think you have little cause to fear him. I wish you could recognise what good and sterling qualities underlie that apparently rough exterior. Pray do not think I am presumptuous ; but the world is so full of sorrowful histories, of mistakes, that our own wilfulness turns into sin ; and some-

times I think a word would help us if only spoken at the right time."

I was silent ; my eyes turned wistfully to the grey line of the sea and the shadows of the lovely island.

"Douglas has never told me anything," he went on in the same low, even tones, "except that for sake of some folly, some mad impulse, he wrecked the promise of a truer happiness than he can ever find again. Do not let your sympathy lead you into danger. Nothing that you can do now will mend the links of that broken chain. There are not many things I believe in, as you know ; but I do believe in a good woman when I find one. Better you should suffer one sharp pang now than drag on a miserable and remorseful existence. Nothing can make up to a woman for the loss of her own self-respect. Believe me, that is the truth."

"Why do you say all this to me ?"

"Because you are just in that half-regretful, half-remorseful mood which is so dangerous. Men can get away from themselves and their miseries ; they gamble, smoke, drink, travel, work ; but women fold their hands and brood. Sentiment is dangerous at such times. Nature becomes a temptress ; its very beauty has an appeal in it that is full of danger. You don't know at first how that subtlety of appeal steals over heart and sense, waking memories which are best lulled to sleep, stirring vague desires to a life of vivid longing. Even the wrong-doer wins softness, and pity, and regret in those hours. She pictures him remorseful, suffering, needing her as she needs him. There are few men indeed who answer to the hopes and dreams of a loving and faithful woman. I am speaking to you very frankly, am I not. I have drunk of a cup so bitter, that the taste of the draught has never left my lips. One woman has given me back some hope, some faith, something of my lost youth. That woman is yourself. I vowed to be your friend, and I will keep that vow. It has given me courage to speak to you to-night. It gave me courage to warn Douglas Hay of the danger to which he was drifting——"

"You ! You spoke to him ?" I faltered.

"Yes ; the night before he left. And what I would like to say to you may sound harsh and hard, but believe me, I do not mean it. If you only knew how the sorrow in your face haunts me. If I were what the world calls 'religious,' I should doubtless preach of prayer, and faith, and trust

in a Divine power, that gives poor humanity stroke upon stroke of trial and suffering for its good. But I can't preach what I don't believe. There are certain broad lines of life, and they lead to certain results. We cannot choose a road that leads to the left with the hope that some chance turn or break in it will conduct to the right. For every sin there is punishment, for every wrong there is retribution, for every error there is suffering. The full meaning and mystery of life none of us may know, but its lessons we are bound to learn. Neither friendship, nor love, nor pity can ward off one blow that Fate has destined for us. Defenceless we are born, and defenceless we must meet whatever our destiny awards. It is cruel, it seems unjust; yet who shall say it is purposeless? Were life a thing of dreams, and days, and death its end, then, indeed, might every soul revolt, and every heart rebel; but there seems a purpose in it that from time to time is revealed in mystery, in some whisper that reaches the spirit in an hour that its mortal and material side cannot unveil. Then we know, we do not explain, we do not perchance ever speak of such a revelation; but for the sake of it we rise with new courage, self-strung to patience and endurance. Else, indeed, who would have courage to live life—to face death."

His voice was low and melancholy, his eyes gazed far away into the clear space of the starry heavens, his face looked white and solemn in the white luminance of moon and stars.

I listened, awed, and stilled, and wondering; but insensibly a great peace and calm stole over the ache and fever of my thoughts. For the first time since that terrible hour when I had prayed never again to look upon my lover's face, the softness of tears stole to my eyes, and relieved something of the tension to which brain, and heart, and feeling had been subjected.

I was not offended. I was not hurt. I felt neither shame nor self-consciousness at the thought of my secret being known to this strange man. He seemed so different to all others. He stood on an eminence of thought and experience so lofty that the fact of his stooping to pity and befriending me was almost a wonder.

A long silence fell between us. Then it was broken at last by the noisy questions and remarks of the others, and we left the peace and beauty of the night for our re-

spective cabins. Huel Pearyth lingered a moment by my side.

"You forgive me?" he said.

I looked hastily up at the tall figure, the strange face, the dark, mysterious eyes.

I made no answer. I think he did not need or expect one. He understood me better than I understood myself.

DINNERS AND DINNER-GIVERS UNDER THE TUDORS.

THE reign of the first of our Tudor Sovereigns was an era of great dinners. The nobles feasted handsomely, and the bishops feasted handsomely; the wealthy guilds and corporations feasted handsomely—establishing a precedent which their successors have religiously observed; and as much may be said of the merchant-princes of London, Bristol, and other great towns. A Venetian traveller—the secretary, or some other member of the household, of Francesco Capello, the Venetian ambassador—who, at this time, was busy taking notes of English manners, writes: "This people think that no greater honour can be conferred or received than to invite others to eat with them; and they would sooner give five or six ducats to provide an entertainment for a person, than a great to assist him in any distress." Is not this still true? He tells us that the smallest inn-keeper served his tables with dishes and drinking-cups of silver. He comments admiringly on the sumptuousness of the civic banquets. At a grand dinner which he attends at the Guildhall, the guests numbered one thousand, and the entertainment was protracted over four hours. He remarks upon the punctiliousness with which the order of precedence was observed, and on the profound silence which prevailed. Evidently the Tudor Englishman looked upon dining as a serious business! At a dinner given by the Sheriff, he is struck with the profusion of viands. Erasmus, by the way, was of opinion that the English people would have enjoyed better health if they had eaten less and drank less. Thus, the evidence of contemporary historians goes to show that I am well-advised in my initial assertion—that the reign of Henry the Seventh was an era of good dinners.

The aforesaid Venetian traveller does justice to Henry the Seventh:

"Though frugal to excess," he says, "in

his own person he does not change any of the ancient usages of England at his Court, but maintains a liberal table, as I had the opportunity of witnessing twice, when I judged on each occasion there might be from six to seven hundred persons at dinner."

Henry preferred, however, to dine at the tables of others; and was seldom better pleased than he was with the hospitable welcome accorded to him when he visited York. He resided at the palace of the Archbishop, who, on the eve of Saint George's festival day, gave a most magnificent banquet in his honour. Six tables were set out: two in the middle, two on each side. At the "midmost table"—that is, the cross table at the top—Henry took his place, wearing his crown and carrying his sceptre. Also, the Archbishop in his robes of State. Knights carved the joints for their behoof, the King's being carved by Sir David Owen, a Welsh cousin; earls waited as servitors; and a Knight of the most worshipful Order of the Garter acted as cup-bearer. At the first table, in the centre of the hall, were the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Privy Seal, the abbots of Saint Mary and of Fountains, with numerous bishops and the Royal chaplains. At the second table, earls, barons, knights, and esquires of the King's body. One of the two tables on the right side was occupied by the City clergy and the minister choir; while at the upper end of the other were several Knights of the Garter, and below them, but with a vacant space between, "other honest persons." The tables on the left were given up, one to the municipal authorities and principal citizens, the other to the judges and some more "honest persons." The surname, or over-cloth, was removed by the knight-marshal, and after dinner occurred a voider, or pause, while the King and his nobles put off their dignities—except such as were Knights of the Garter, who rode to even-song, still attired in the sumptuous habit of their Order—to say grace after meat.

The Northumberland Household Book reveals the magnificent scale on which the English nobles still maintained their households. The Lord of Warkworth, besides his chamberlain, his treasurer, his constables, his chaplains, supported one hundred and fifty-six persons, and frequently entertained, in addition, fifty or sixty guests. He allowed for his annual expenditure a sum of one thousand one hundred and seventy-eight pounds, seven-

teen shillings and eightpence, of which nearly three-fourths—seven hundred and ninety-seven pounds, eleven shillings and twopence—were spent upon provisions and food. The cost of each individual for these two items was fixed at twopence halfpenny per day, about one shilling and sixpence of our present money. Erasmus remarks that the English ate too much salted meat; and from the Northumberland Book it appears that the Earl's household enjoyed fresh meat only three months in the year. One hundred fat beeves were bought at All-Hallows Tide, at thirteen shillings and sixpence, and a couple of dozen, at eight shillings, at Saint Helen's, to be fattened for the table between Midsummer and Michaelmas. Six hundred and forty-seven sheep were eaten, salted, between Lammas and Michaelmas; and for the Earl's own table, twenty-five hogs, twenty-eight calves, and forty lambs were killed. The supply of mustard was no less than one hundred and sixty-six gallons; but it was doubtlessly found necessary as an aid to the digestion of so much salted meat. Capons and plovers occasionally graced the Earl and Countess's private table. Their appetites, however, must have been by no means squeamish; since their regular breakfast consisted of a quart of ale, a quart of wine, and a chine of beef, or half a chine of mutton; the beef or mutton being exchanged on fast-days for a dish of herrings or sprats, fresh or salted.

Mr. Froude, with his customary skill, draws a picture of social England at the beginning of the reign of Henry the Eighth.

"The habits of all classes," he says, "were open, free, and liberal. There are two expressions, corresponding one to the other, which we frequently meet with in old writings, and which are used as a kind of index marking whether the condition of things was, or was not, what it ought to be. We read of 'merry England'—when England was not merry, things were not going well with it. We hear of 'the glory of hospitality,' England's pre-eminent boast—by the rules of which, all tables, from the table of the twenty-shilling freeholder to the table in the baron's hall and abbey refectory, were open at the dinner-hour to all comers, without stint or reserve, or question asked. To every man, according to his degree, who chose to ask for it, there was free fare and free lodging; bread, beef, and beer for his dinner; for

his lodging, perhaps, only a mat of rushes in a spare corner of the hall, with a billet of wood for a pillow; but freely offered and freely taken, the guest probably faring much as his host fared, neither worse nor better . . . The 'glory of hospitality' lasted far down into Elizabeth's time; and then, as Camden says, 'came in great bravery of building, to the marvellous beautifying of the realm, but to the decay' of what he valued more.

"In such frank style the people lived, hating three things with all their hearts—idleness, want, and cowardice; and, for the rest, carrying their hearts high, and having their hands full. The hour of rising, winter and summer, was four o'clock, with breakfast at five; after which the labourers went to work and the gentlemen to business, of which they had no little . . . At twelve he dined; after dinner he went hunting, or to his farm, or to what he pleased. It was a life unrefined, perhaps, but coloured with a broad, rosy, English health."

Of the state maintained in the early years of the sixteenth century by some of the great ecclesiastics, let Cardinal Wolsey's household furnish an example.

Three boards were daily spread in his hall, wherever he might be resident. At the head of the first sat a priest as steward; at the head of the second, a knight as treasurer; and at the head of the third, an esquire as comptroller. The kitchen establishment was liberally organised, consisting of a master cook, whose daily dress was either velvet or satin, with a gold chain as his badge of office; two under-cooks; and six assistants, or labourers, as they were called; besides two clerks as comptrollers, and a surveyor over the dressers. In the hall-kitchen were two cooks, and twelve labourers and children; the spicery was superintended by a clerk; the pastry was served by two yeomen and two paste-layers; the scullery, by four scullions, besides one yeoman and two grooms. There were a yeoman and a groom in the larder; two yeomen and two grooms in the buttery; the same in the ewery; three yeomen and three pages in the cellar; and two yeomen in the chandlery.

The list is not yet complete. We must add two yeomen in the wafery; a master of the wardrobe, with twenty assistants, or "male chambermaids," in the bedroom department; a yeoman and groom, thirteen pages, two yeoman purveyors, and a groom

purveyor, in the laundry. Then, in the bakehouse, two yeomen and grooms; one yeoman and groom in the wood-yard; one yeoman in the garner; and two yeomen and two grooms as porters at the gate.

Wolsey frequently received his Royal master as a guest, especially at York House; and the number and sumptuousness of his banquets was, indeed, a constant theme with the satirist. Sometimes they were diversified by freaks of fancy such as belonged to an age when the Italian influence was beginning to make itself felt amid the coarse surroundings of English social life. Here is an example:

The King proceeded to the Cardinal's Palace one day, in masquerade, attended by a dozen of his courtiers and favourites, all masked, and attired in garments like those of shepherds, but made of fine cloth of gold and crimson satin. Sixteen torch-bearers followed, with drummers, and others, all masked and brave in satin. Wolsey had received secret intimation of the Royal frolic, but kept up a show of ignorance, contenting himself with planting some guns at the water-gate, to be fired on the arrival of any stranger. Meanwhile, he sat down to dinner with a glittering company of ladies, and knights, and nobles, who were diverted during the repast by "divers kinds of music." When the discharge of ordnance broke in upon their festivity, great was the surprise of the guests—a surprise which Wolsey, seated under his "cloth of estate," pretended to share, and he therefore ordered Lord Sands to ascertain the cause of the salute. Lord Sands, after looking out of a window that opened on the river, informed the Cardinal that some nobles and strangers had apparently arrived at the water-gate—perhaps on an embassy from some foreign Prince. Wolsey then desired him to go down and receive them, and invite them to join "these noble personages sitting merrily at our banquet."

With a train of twenty torch-bearers, and a great company of drums and fifes, Lord Sands ushered the masquers into the banqueting-room. With stately steps they repaired to the Cardinal's chair, and saluted him very reverently, while Lord Sands, standing forward as master of the ceremonies, addressed him on their behalf, saying that they "having understanding of this your triumphant banquet, where was assembled such a number of excellent fair dames,

could do no less, under the supportation of your good Grace, than to view as well their incomparable beauty, as for to accompany them at munchance [a game at dice, which seems to have been played in silence] and then after to dance with them, and so to have of their acquaintance."

Having received the Cardinal's permission, they hastened to salute all the ladies; and afterwards, returning "to the most worthiest," opened before her a great cup of gold, filled with "crowns, and other pieces of coin, to whom they set divers pieces to cast at." Then "perusing all the ladies and gentlewomen," of some they won, and to some they lost; and going back to the chair of state, the masquers deferentially selected him, and poured down at his feet all their winnings, amounting to two hundred crowns.

"At all's!" exclaimed the Cardinal; and rattling his box, he threw and won—apparently to the entire gratification of his guests and visitors. Then said Wolsey to the Lord Chamberlain:

"I pray you show them, that it seemeth me there should be among them some noble man, whom I suppose to be much more worthy of honour to sit and occupy this room and place than I—to whom I would most gladly surrender the same, according to my duty, if I knew him."

To the masquers Lord Sands repeated, in French, the Cardinal's submissive words. They whispered a reply, and Sands then said to Wolsey:

"Sir, they confess that amongst them is such a noble personage, whom, if your Grace can appoint him from the others, he is contented to disclose himself, and to accept your place most worthily."

Descending from his seat, Wolsey went in among the masquers, and after a pretence of hesitation, said:

"Meseemeth that the gentleman with the black beard should be even he," thereupon courteously offered his seat to the visitor he had indicated. But the masquers cried out that he was in error, and the black-bearded gentleman revealed himself, as Sir Edward Neville, a county knight, of a goodly aspect, who did, in figure, more resemble the well-proportioned Henry than any other in the masque. At the Cardinal's mistake, the King laughed heartily, and having removed his vizard, "all the noble estates rejoiced very much, and the Cardinal desired his Highness to take his place of estate." Henry answered

that he would first "shift his apparel," and retiring to Wolsey's bed-chamber, where a great fire was blazing, arrayed himself in right Royal fashion. In the interval, the servants cleared the tables, and covered them anew with fresh and highly-perfumed cloths, the guests meanwhile retaining their seats: On the re-appearance of Henry and his masquers they all rose, and remained standing until he had taken his place under the cloth of estate; after which a new service of two hundred dishes was brought in, of which every guest most heartily partook. The dinner ended, the dance began. It lasted until daylight, and Wolsey "much enjoyed," says Cavendish, "to see his prince and sovereign lord so nobly entertained."

The irony of life has seldom received a more striking illustration than when, in his day of failure and disgrace, Wolsey, broken-hearted and ailing, lay at Esher for three months, "without beds, sheets, tablecloths, cups, or dishes," and, before he could dine with decency, was compelled to borrow, "both dishes to eat his meat in, and plate to drink in."

The sort of "fooling" in which Wolsey indulged his master was congenial to the spirit of the age as well as to Henry's temper; and the King at his own banquets frequently practised some similar entertainment, or revived the old exercises and feats of chivalry. In 1515 he kept Christmas at Eltham; and there, in the stately banqueting-hall, erected by Edward the Fourth, on Twelfth Night, "a goodly castle" was "wonderously set out," and in it "certain ladies and knights," and when Henry and his Queen were seated, in came other knights and assailed the castle, where many a good stripe was given, and at the last the assailants were beaten away. And then issued out knights and ladies out of the castle, which ladies were rich and strangely disguised, for all their apparel was in braids of gold, fretted with moving spangles, silver and gilt, set on cramoisie satin, loose, and not fastened; the men's apparel of the same suit made like "fulys" of Hungary, and the ladies' heads and bodies were after the fashion of Amsterdam. And when the dancing was done, the banquet was served in of two hundred dishes, with great plenty to everybody.

The story is well known; it is told by quaint old Fuller—this is the correct mode of referring to the author of "The Worthies of England," and "The Church History,"

just as Hooker is always "judicious," and Isaac Walton "genial"—how that Henry the Eighth, in his great liking for these mummings and disguisings, once imposed himself upon the Abbot of Reading as a gentleman of the Royal Guard. The Abbot invited him to dinner, at which he played so noble a part that the portly priest declared he would give a hundred pounds for such an appetite. Shortly afterwards the Abbot, to his surprise and alarm, was arrested, thrown into the Tower, and kept on bread and water until his corpulency disappeared. Then, one day, a roast sirloin was put before him at dinner. He attacked it with tremendous gusto, and Alice followed Alice into his hungry stomach. Enter King Henry: "Sir Abbot, I have cured you of your want of appetite, as the skeleton and poor remains of yonder sirloin do testify, and now demand payment of the hundred pounds."

Unhappy Anne Boleyn was a nice eater; fond, as so many beautiful women are, of dainties and delicacies, and apt to be discontented if she did not get them. When her star first rose above the horizon of the Court, Thomas Heneage wrote to Wolsey that he had, one night, been "commanded down with a dish for Mistress Anne for supper," adding, that she caused him "to sup with her, and she wished she had some of Wolsey's good meat, as carps, shrimps, and others." He goes on to suggest to the Cardinal that she was a little displeased at not having received a token from him; she was afraid she was forgotten—he says—and "the lady, her mother, desired him to send unto his Grace, and desire his Grace to bestow a morsel of time upon her."

We may assume, therefore, that when, in the days of his wooing, Henry rode down to Hever to spend an hour or two with the beautiful maid of honour, she took care that their dinner-table should be furnished with the choicest dishes her father's cook could concoct. During her brief guestdom she satisfied her tastes to the full; for the Royal cook, or clerk of the kitchen, Master William Thynne, was an artist of surpassing ingenuity and invention. No table in Christendom was more happily served than Henry the Eighth's; and its high reputation is impressed upon us by the fact that when the Pope sent Cardinal Campeggio to England to arbitrate between Henry and Queen Catherine, he strictly enjoined upon the Cardinal to gain

all the information he could relative to the Royal cuisine.

For myself, however, I would rather have dined with More in his quiet family circle at Chelsea—especially when Erasmus, and Colet, and Linacre were his guests—though the fare was simple, and the service unostentatious—than at the King's table with all its luxurious excess.

There was gross eating and heavy drinking, it is to be feared, among all classes of society in Henry's reign. The physicians of the time inveighed strongly against the increasing appetite for sensual indulgence. William Bullen, for instance, in his "Government of Health," strongly advocates the rule of moderation, summing up his advice in rhyming Latin:

*Esse cupio sanus, sit tibi paves manus;
Pene gula metas, ut sit tibi longa sates.*

If of health you are thinking, be not often drinking;
If you'd live long quiet, be sparing of your diet.

And Andrew Boorde is not less emphatic in his "Dietary" and "Breviary of Health": "If a man will eschew many pains and dolours," he says, "let him live a sober life, and not distemper or disquiet the body by any excess or sensuality." In "The Dietary" occurs an odd chapter on drunkenness. Thus it runs:

"Ebrietas is the Latin word. In Greek it is named Maethæ. In English it is named Drunkenness.

"THE CAUSE OF THIS IMPEDIMENT.

"This impediment doth come either by weakness of the brain, or else by some great hurt in the head, or of too much rick.

"A REMEDY.

"If it do come by a hurt in the head, there is no remedy but patience of all parts. If it do come by debility of the brain and head, drink in the morning a dish of milk, use a syrup named Sirupus acetosus prunis, and use laxative meats and purgatives, if need do require, and beware of superfluous drinking, specially of wine and ale and strong beer; and if any man do perceive that he is drunk, let him take a vomit with water and oil, or with a feather, or a rosemary branch, or else with his finger, or else let him go to his bed to sleep."

When Henry was not gambling, buying jewellery, building, disgracing or beheading his favourites, getting rid of his wives, or administering the affairs of the realm, he seems to have been eating and drinking. Both as regards his viands and his liquors,

his taste must be pronounced Catholic; and it is not easy to decide what were his preferences in either direction. No light is thrown upon the subject by the presents he received; since, if we assumed that the donors would naturally wish to consult the Royal liking, we should be thrown out by the fact that almost every imaginable article of food was offered and accepted—fish, poultry, game, swans, cranes, birds, baked lampreys, pies, puddings, fruit, meat, and quince pasties. I should add that these loyal offerings were always acknowledged by a gratuity, which not infrequently exceeded the value of the gift. Some of the entries in the King's privy purse expenses are curious enough. As thus:

Item. Paied to a yong man that gave the King peres . . . vs.

Item. Paid to A woman in Rewarde for gyving to the King's Grace A fat Capon and a henne . . . viis. vjd.

Item. Paied to A wheler of Howslowe in rewarde for gyving the King's Grace Apulles . . . vs.

These payments were made in November, 1531. In the following month we read:

Item. Paied in Rewarde to James Hobart for bringing lymons, pomegranetts, and oranges to the King . . . xis.

Item. Paied in rewarde to a servant of Sir Giles Capell for bringing of fesaunts to the King . . . xa.

Item. Paied to a serventt of myne olde lady Guldeford in rewarde for bringing of warden pyes* to the King's Grace . . . xa.

Item. Paied to Elizabeth Aynes in Rewarde for bringing ij barells of Socado, and Cakes to the King's Grace . . . xis.

In April, 1532, we read:

Item. Paied in Rewarde to James Hobart for bringing of oranges, dates, and other pleasures to the King's Grace . . . xxiiis. vjd.

Payments to this person are of frequent recurrence; and as he always brings the same articles, I conclude he was a fruiterer. We meet also with payments made for chickens, citrons, "myllones and cokemers," grapes and peaches, cucumbers, peascods—much esteemed for food—wardens—pears so called—a porpoise, and carps. And there is a reward of twenty

shillings to Sir Anthony Browne's cook—probably for some dainty dish with which he had gratified the Royal palate.

Among the wines paid for are: White wine of Galiake—so called from Galliac, in Languedoc, which was then famous for its vintages; and Sodde—that is, boiled wine; but considerable quantities were purchased and stored, the descriptions of which are not specified. The wines used in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries included, however, numerous varieties—in the "Vision of Piers Plowman" are named:

White wine of Osey, and Red wine of Gascoyne;
Of the Rume and of the Rochell the roasted to defy;

and in the Earl of Northumberland's Household Book an entry occurs of "x ton ij hogsheds of Gascoigne wyne, for the expensys of my house for an hole year—viz., iij ton of Rede wyne, v ton of Claret wyne, and ij ton and ij hogsheds of white wyne after iiij l. viij s. iiij d. the ton." And one Thomas Allen, writing to the Earl of Shrewsbury, in 1506, says: "This day I trust to send towards Wyndfield ij tonne wyne; whereof iiij hogshedd claret, ij red wyne, on(e) whit wyne, and th'oder punchin freche wyne. If hit be well carried, I trust your Lordship will lik hit well. Hit will cost viij, vj s. viij d. the tonne." And in another letter, written in 1517, he says: "I have bought iij ton of new Gascon wyne; weather your Lordship will have new or olde sent downe I cannot tell. Your Lordship comands also iij hogsheds of wyne of . . . or of wyne of Gruves, and iij hogsheds of such Freneche white wyne as ye had last yer of John Asten to be send(t) here is non yet com, as Alen Kyng sheweth unto me, wolk befor Crismas. Yr Lordship hathe ij hogsheds of olde French wyne, of Byon (? Bayonne), at Coleherbert; as for Rynish wyne there com never more so bad as com this yer; as soon as any comys that is good, your Lordship shall have thereof. As Alen Kyng sheweth unto me ther was ij vessell of Muscadyne wyne which was good, the King had on(e), my Lord Cardinall (Wolsey) the other."

It was not only the physicians who protested against the drunkenness and gluttony which the increasing wealth and prosperity of the country developed. These vices were attacked on the stage, from the pulpit, and in the writings of satirists and moralists; but with little effect. Listen to Thomas Nash—who as-

* Warden pies were greatly relished by our ancestors. We learn from Shakespeare that saffron was used for colouring them. The clown, in "A Winter's Tale," says: "Then I must have saffron to colour the warden pies."

surely was not distinguished for his austerity :

"We must have our tables furnished," he says, "like poulterers' stalls, or as though we were to victual Noah's ark again. What a coil have we, this course and that course, removing this dish higher, setting another lower, and taking away the third. A general might in less space remove his camp than they stand disposing of their gluttony. From gluttony in meals let us descend to superfluity in drink—a sin, that, ever since we have mixed ourselves with the Low Countries, is counted honourable, but, before we knew their lingering wars, was held in the highest degree of hatred that might be."

Puritan Stubbes compares the elaborate dishes, the meats, the sauces, the sweet condiments, the delicate confections which were "all the rage" in his day, with the simplicities of a past age, when "one dish or two of good wholesome meat was thought sufficient for a man of great worship to dine withal." And he complains that "every county, city, town, village, and other places, hath abundance of ale-houses, taverns, and inns, which are so fraught with malt-worms, night and day, that you would wonder to see them."

A PALACE OF PLEASURE.

It is a heavy demand on the imagination of any man living in these days to ask him to figure to himself a time when the literature of fiction was almost non-existent. What would life be to most of us without our novel? To a majority of households the circulating library, as an institution, stands only a little after the butcher or the baker. Count Moltke, it is well-known, has all his life been a greedy consumer of fiction, and rumour farther says that the more thrilling it is the better he likes it.

In these times, when men shoulder each other at every turn in the struggle for competence or wealth, the worker, when the day's fight with fortune is done, if he happens to have energy to master any printed matter beyond the paragraphs of his evening paper, turns gratefully to some page from which he may gather impressions of a world differing as widely as possible from that which he has had to face since the last sun rose.

But the Englishman living in that golden age of Elizabeth, about which we

are hearing a good deal nowadays, had a very narrow choice before him, should his taste have led him in the direction of romantic literature. It is true that there were many who could not read, and those who could, lived easier lives, and had no need to soothe their brains with the mental sedative which distills from the pages of an absorbing well-written story. They did not even yearn for tobacco, seeing that Raleigh had not yet returned from over seas. What men they must have been in those days, or rather what giants, for they managed to lead merry lives; albeit unconsoled either by pipe or novel. "The Seven Champions of Christendom," and Malory's "Morte d'Arthur" stood almost alone then as works of fiction. Sidney's "Arcadia," the morning star of English romance, did not appear till 1590, and the translations of Palmerin of England, and Amadis of Gaul only preceded it by a few years, so it must have been a great event in the world of letters when, in 1566, it was announced that Mr. William Painter, "clerk to the ordnance and armarie," had published a bulky tome entitled by him, "The Palace of Pleasure, beautified, adorned, and well-furnished with pleasant Histories and excellent Novels, selected out of divers good and commendable authors."

Of Mr. William Painter the author, or rather the translator, not much is known, and the little we do know is not altogether to his credit. He must have been a graduate of one of the Universities, to account for his occupancy of the post of head-master of the Grammar School at Sevenoaks, an office he certainly filled in 1560. In 1561 he seems to have deserted the toga for arms, or rather for the care of them, and to have taken the office of clerk of the ordnance at the Tower on a salary of eightpence a day, not a great salary for such an important post, even as pennies went in those times. It is, therefore, somewhat a surprise to hear of him as the purchaser of certain manors at Gillingham, in Kent. But there was a war fever in those days. The Spaniard had to be pounded and battered both in the old world and in the new; and a good deal of money for the purchase of great ordnance must have passed through William Painter's hands. Some of it seems to have stuck to his fingers in the passage, hence the Gillingham manors; but it is not with the irregularities in his accounts that we have to do. We are interested rather in

the feat of putting together and producing the book which was really the first English library of fiction.

He gleams over a wide field. Stories of Roman, Grecian, and Persian history are set forth in familiar style. These probably he gathered from Herodotus and Aulus Gellius during his mastership at Sevenoaks; but the kernel of the book is found in the Italian section. Following in the track of Boccaccio, a band of imitators had poured forth stories by the hundred, and out of this vast mass—a mass too often exhaling, it must be owned, the deep corruption, the utter disregard of moral obligation, which had then fallen upon Italy—Painter selects certain of the more attractive for his collection. In all ages Italy has exercised a wonderful power over the lettered Englishman, and her seductive charm was never greater than it was in the middle of the sixteenth century, when the dwellers in our old northern island began to know something of the taste of the fruits of the Italian Renaissance. Vague rumours flew about the Court and the Universities of the strange world, rich with the spoils of time, which lay on the other side of the Alps—rumours which were spread chiefly by the wandering scholars who had come, at the invitation of Colet and More, to teach the Greek tongue; and very soon a stream of young noblemen and students, Wyatt and Sidney amongst them, began to flow towards this new land of promise.

The French, and the Spaniards, and the Germans had been beforehand; they had come as armed foes, and had spread ruin and desolation everywhere, carrying away little with them beyond the plunder in their wallets and saddle-bags; but this later incursion of Englishmen was of a very different character. They were awestricken by the ruin they saw on every side, and charmed by the remains of civilisation which had escaped the brutal soldiers of Ferdinand and Bourbon, by the indestructible beauty of the country itself, by the softness and courtesy of the people, and by the wealth of literature ready to their hand. This last was the most potent spell. It was a season of abnormal intellectual activity everywhere; and these men were almost instinctively drawn to the land where there was such rich store of the food after which they longed. At home in England wherewith was their hunger to be satisfied? Chaucer there was, indeed, and a few dry bones of scholastic philo-

sophy, and uncouth metrical moralities; but the newly-awakened genius of the age demanded more generous diet than these. Men with the intellectual longing strong upon them rushed off to gather it in Italy, just as the coarser spirits set sail for the new world to lay hands upon the gold and jewels of the overthrown monarchies of Mexico and Peru.

It is not at all improbable that William Painter, during his college life, or while he was supposed to be teaching the humanities at Sevenoaks, may have come across some of the numerous translations, mostly in French, of the current Italian novels which had then obtained a wide popularity in England, or he may even have met face to face some traveller just returned from prying with greedy eyes into the ruinous crannies of an overthrown civilisation, and rewarded with one grain of pure metal, extracted from the vast heap of unclean fancies and empty pedantry through which he may have searched. Painter was just one of the men who would have rushed off to Italy with the rest, had not the chain of circumstance kept him at home; so it was not at all wonderful that he should read every scrap of Italian romance which he might find, and listen eagerly to the words of some returned traveller.

How keen was the desire after the new fruit—some of it certainly of a very unwholesome growth—and how dangerous a symptom this yearning appeared to the soberer spirits of the time, is shown in the vehement diatribe which Roger Ascham in "The Scholemaster" pours forth against those travellers who wander into Cæsar's court, and bring back the abominations for the corruption of their stay-at-home brethren. He writes: "Vantise, and vice, and any licence to ill-living in England, was counted stale and flat unto them. And so beyng Mules and Horses before they went, returned verie Swyne and Asses home agayne; yet everie where verie Foxes, with as subtle and busie heads and where they may, verie Woolves with cruell malicious hartes, carrying at once in one bodye the belie of a Swyne, the head of an Ass, the brayne of a Foze, the wombe of a Wolfe. If you think we judge amisse, and write too sore against you, hear what the Italian sayeth of the Englishman. 'Engleso italianato e un diabolo incarnato.' If some do not well understand what is an Englishman Italianated, I will plainly tell him. He that by living and travelling in Italie

bringeth home into England the religion, the learning, the policie, the manners, of Italia. These be the enchantments of Circe to marre men's manners in England, much by example of ill life, but more by fonde bookes of late translated out of Italian into English and sold in every shop in London. It is a pity that those who have authority and charge to allow and disallowe bookes to be printed be no more circumspect herein. Yea, I say farther, these bookes tend not so much to corrupt honest living as they do to subvert trewe religion. Mo Papists be made by your many bookes of Italia, than by your earnest bookes of Louvain. These men, giving themselves up to vanitie, shakying off the notions of Grace, driving from them the feare of God, and running headlong into all sinne, first lustily contemn God, then scornfullie mocke His worde, and also spitefullie hate all well willers thereof. Then they have in more reverence the triumphes of Petrarch than the Genesis of Moses. They make more account of Tullie's Offices than of Saint Paule's Epistles; of a tale in Boccace than a story in the Bible."

It is almost certain that honest Ascham, in this counterblast of his, must have had Painter's newly published book in his mind. His scolding sentences were written and evidently interpolated in the text of "The Scholemaster," in 1568, two years after the appearance of Painter's complete work. Ascham was very much in earnest; but his warnings to the youth of England to turn away their eyes from the allurements of the new Circe, had probably just as much effect as such warnings have had from the beginning. His preaching certainly did not deter that band of young men who were then trying their hands at stage plays. There is not much evidence that Marlowe, the leader, borrowed much in the way of plot from Painter's storehouse; but he certainly was strongly influenced in his later works by the study of Italian models.

Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows,
is the speech of Gaveston to King Edward the Second. Those who followed him, Fletcher, in "The Maid of the Mill;" Webster, in "Applus and Virginia," and "The Dutchess of Malfy;" Shirley, in "Love's Cruelty;" Massinger, in "The Picture;" Marston, in "The Wonder of Women;" and Shakespeare in "Coriolanus," "Timon of Athens," "All's Well

that Ends Well," and "Romeo and Juliet," certainly used the "Palace of Pleasure" freely.

They laid the Italian books under contribution, both with regard to the framework of plot which they proposed to clothe with their own fancies, and in the elaboration of these fancies themselves. They were, probably, more powerfully influenced by what they read in Painter, as to the spirit of their work, than even they were in its form. Everywhere one sees the deep impression, the vivid memory picture of Italy itself, and of the positive secular mode of thought, which was then the ruling one. Where the whole plot of the play was not borrowed from an Italian novel, the author filled his lines with allusion to things Italian. His characters bore Italian names, and spoke Italian whenever they ceased to speak English. Of Shakespeare's comedies, only one has the scene laid in England, viz., "The Merry Wives of Windsor;" while six are placed in Italy itself; and in all the others the characters and the surroundings alike are thoroughly "Itallanate," though one is told they are situated in Vienna, or Navarre, or in "a wood near Athens."

In "Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare has followed almost exactly the story given in Painter; and certain critics have laid it to his charge that he has only inserted one original incident—the death of Paris—and only created one new character, to wit, Mercutio. Painter's version of this most pathetic story is taken almost literally from a novel by Luigi da Porto; but strangely enough, he has omitted one incident, which, in the Italian tale, is made to lead up to one of the finest and most pathetic scenes, namely, the awakening of Juliet from her drugged trance in the tomb before Romeo dies.

For the rest of his stories, Painter draws chiefly upon Boccaccio, Bandello, and Ser Giovanni. In some of these he is very amusing; and even when a whole page of seemingly purposeless description makes a heavy demand on the reader's patience, there is always some compensation in the quaint turn of phrase and expression, to say nothing of the ingenuity with which he glides over very thin ice. The tales, drawn of classic sources, are, it must be confessed, very dull. The original volumes are amongst the rarest of books, and even a reprint, which appeared at the beginning of the present century, is become very scarce; but Mr. David Nutt has

recently come to the rescue, and has given to the world a very fine edition, admirably edited, of this book, which certainly marked, by its first appearance, an epoch in English literature.

SOME PLEASURES OF GENIUS.

I ONCE listened to an interesting and erudite lecture on Freemasonry from a gentleman who was not a Mason. It was a mystery to me, and to many others who were Masons; how this man, first of all, could have the audacity to lecture on such a subject at all; and, secondly, how he could succeed in saying so much that enchained the attention of the very elect themselves, who, you would have thought, might rather have despised the matter of his address as much as they would have blamed him for his presumption.

Well, it is with the memory of this event in my mind that I, who am no genius, am bold enough to take up my parable on a subject which you might think could only be treated adequately by a genius.

Really, however, I need not have troubled thus to justify myself. Is it upon the soldier, busily engaged in fighting his country's battles, that in these days we rely for an account of his campaign? By no means. The man who puts his deeds on record, and describes the manoeuvres of the enemy whom he appears so eager in combating, is an outsider. He is not even a proficient in the mere theory of warfare. And yet he need not betray his ignorance in a crushing manner; and he may succeed in writing with the spirit and apparent inner knowledge of one who has seen many battlefields.

The man of genius is common property. Every one is privileged to cast the eye of scrutiny upon him and his deeds, and to form a judgement of him in accordance with individual ability, and—'tis so in too many instances—individual prejudice. Whether he is alive, or whether he is dead, he is liable at any moment to be laid upon the dissecting-table; to have his various qualities, moral or intellectual, separated the one from the other, put under the microscope, used as texts for the debates of students or for the discourses of those contemporary with the genius himself. It is inevitable. The poor genius may not like it. But he can-

not help himself. Perhaps the knowledge of what he is thus liable to, does in some cases aid him in living so that the world may not readily obtain a handle for the discredit of his reputation. But the contrary also happens. He is so irritated by his mind's agitations, and the reiterated assertion that he is a man apart from other men, that he yields to temptation as inordinate as his intelligence, and, with a fiery, contemptuous challenge, defies the world to do its worst. He even makes a pretence of feeling proud of the various vices which in due time form the main subject of the lectures upon him and his abilities. Well for him, then, if he may say with certitude, in the words upon the tombstone of poor Keats, in that pretty Roman cemetery by the great pyramid of the ancient Cestus: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

These various contingencies cannot be viewed as part of the pleasures of the genius. The true genius is apt to be modest, unmindful largely of the world's interest in him, intent chiefly upon the development of the creative fury within him. It is insufferable to him that he may not hope to go out for his daily walk, to commune with Nature, or, at least, to breathe the fresh air in the peace of obscurity. It may be fame to be followed by five or six or more ardent and admiring but undeclared disciples at such a time. But it is none the less very tiresome. And the genius himself may in all sincerity be excused if "he hastily puts a period to his constitutional, and returns in a fume to his humble cot."

The charge of a genius is no slight responsibility. It is only too obvious. How shall the rest of us, of common clay and Philistine impulses, anticipate the yearnings of so envied, but transcendental a creature? While we are talking of mutton chops or asparagus heads, he may be in earnest communion with the Muses in heaven. Our coarse, insensible words may jangle his sweet bells out of tune, and usher the impatience of madness into his delicate soul. We do it without knowing; but that does not make the result less distressing, though it acquits us of criminality.

Listen to what "Christopher North"—in his "Noctes Ambrosianæ"—puts into the mouth of the English opium-eater, on the subject:

"A poet's heart is the sanctuary of dim and tender memories—holy ground

haunted by the ghosts of the beautiful—some of whom will be for long, long years as if they were not—sojourning in some world beyond the reach of thought—when lo! all in a moment, like white sea birds, gleaming inland from the misty main, there they are glide-gliding through the illumined darkness, and the entire region of the spirit is beatified by the heavenly visitants."

Is it not a charming portrayal of the transfigured recesses of the mind of a genius? But to the Philistines, how irresistible an object of railing! "Tis very well," these latter might say, "if our friends, whose brains are so fatally perverted, stand in no need to earn their daily crusts! Then they may dwell in these unpractical and unmarketable fancies as long as they please. It is of course most culpable idleness in a world upon which the primeval mandate, 'Thou shalt eat thy bread by the sweat of thy brow,' may still be said to be in force. But we can excuse the poor fellow, if his twist in that direction is quite too powerful. At the best, he is a harmless sort of maniac. So long as he does not inoculate others with the same unprofitable notions, we will not interfere with him. If he prefers the society of 'ghosts of the beautiful' to living and moving creatures who are beautiful and not yet ghosts—poor fellow again!—he may be pitied afresh, but humoured. It is one of the pleasures of genius forsooth."

It all hinges on the result of a comparison between the real and ideal. The man to whom fancy, ideality, tells nothing at all is not likely to have much sympathy with the poet or other person who lives in an atmosphere of the ideal, and to whom real incidents are of interest and value solely in so far as they may serve like stepping-stones into new regions of the ideal. Having little or none of the gift of imagination, one may find life full of thrill and satisfying enjoyment. But the imagination fancies that there are better pleasures than those tendered to us daily or hourly on the earth. It scuds off, therefore, into a realm of its own, and the more it finds itself at home there, the less it is sure to be at home in the hard, tangible world among men and women who are contented with things as they seem.

Thus there is an unavoidable want of sympathy between the man of the world and the man of a cultivated imagination.

I remember once spending six weeks

with a poet who could not, despite his most earnest efforts, suspend his poetic impulses. Heaven knows it was a barbarous test to put him to. It was a condition of our companionship that he should have nothing to do with the Muses all the time we were together. It was the harder for him, since we were then travelling through some of the most inspiring scenes in Europe. There was natural beauty at our every step; and history had left her mark upon the country.

For the first few days, my friend kept his compact religiously. He jested and amused himself, and read the newspapers, and looked at mountains, and rivers, and village costumes like a thoroughly accomplished Philistine. It was marvellous. He had the self-control of a statesman, as well as the feelings of the poet. He rose higher than ever in my esteem. I began to fancy that Plato was quite out of it in his dogmatic assumption that a poet must be a peril in the State. The dear fellow was as expert, too, at taxing the bills of our hotels as if he had spent all his precious youth in business, and meant to leave a considerable fortune behind him at his death.

But on the sixth or seventh day, I woke to see a magnificent sunbeam shining into our room, across the mountains and the lake of which we had so glorious a prospect from our large, double window; and to perceive farther that my friend had stolen a march on me. This was at variance with his daily custom. I felt anxious. Dressing hastily, I went out, for the moment heedless of the morning swim in the lake in which we had agreed to indulge. No, he had not taken coffee, said the waiter. According to the chambermaid—a very early bird—he had been caught unbolting the door at the preposterous hour of five, when the sun itself had not long risen; and there was a look of determination on his face that made the girl wonder.

Alas! thought I. Had he yielded to the urgings of some fiendish mood, and flung himself into the pellucid blue lake, to submerge his individuality in the vast bosom of the infinite? That was his way of talking when he was in the mood; and we had quite recently been discussing the subject of suicide as dispassionately as it was ever discussed.

Well, to cut my tale short, after a desperate and most fatiguing climb, I found the poor fellow perched on a little

mountain top, sucking a lead-pencil, and with paper in his hand. He had surrendered to the temptation, as one does surrender to temptations at times.

The worst of it was that he gloried in his iniquity, and thus snapped the chain of alliance which had, by mutual agreement, linked us together. He called me "sordid," and much else, and if I had not strained a point and put into the compact permission for him thenceforward to have one day's poetic madness in every seven, he would have left me forthwith. He persisted that the pleasure of this brief hour or two of inspiration, with the sun gradually gilding the lake at his feet, and the fleecy night-clouds departing irradiate from the higher peaks, was worth all the hours of the several days we had hitherto spent in each other's company.

I suppose I did right in making this concession to him, though it went against the grain. He was very grumpy when the mood seized him every seventh day; and the day after his inspiration was, for all exertion's sake, a "dies non." But a book came of it; and some said the verse was sweet and true, though others said just the opposite. My friend himself, however, was satisfied with the book, and, I must say that his presentation copy to me, in blue calf, with his coat of arms beautifully emblazoned on the upper cover, and a special sonnet of dedication on the opening page, quite reconciled me to what inconvenience I suffered as a result of my indulgence.

Shakespeare has told us that :

Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues.

This, as a general statement, is sufficiently true. But in the case of a recognised genius in whom imagination is very strong, it is not quite trustworthy. Are there not many instances of the genius giving his heart, for example, to objects immeasurably beneath him? The poor fellow does not see his folly until it is too late. The maid has somehow won a way into the palace of his fancy. Straight he decks her with a myriad of qualities of which really she does not know even the rudiments. He crowns her simple brow with garlands, puts jewels about her person, and leads her to the throne he has prepared for her. She is to be the queen of his heart, the mistress of that proud domain for which hitherto no woman has been found worthy.

This is delightful enough for the poet

himself, until his deed is subjected to those harsh tests which run with experience. Though he walk chin-deep in illusion, no matter: he is so enormously happy that it were almost a crime to unveil to him his error. His spirit is superbly touched; his muse, his fancy, disports itself in this bright sea with no thought or even dream that the issue may be mournful, perhaps tragic to the last degree.

The inference is clear. It does not follow that the man or woman of genius ought, for his or her own sake, to be debarred from the pleasures which we of the Philistine class enjoy. Not at all. But by hook or by crook they must be kept enlightened as to the true nature of the more sensual experiences to which they are allured in their weaker moments. This applies expressly to marriage. It may, indeed, be questioned most seriously if it is ever well for the genius thus to tether his soul so unequivocally to the mud-clots at his feet. "In time," we are well told, "the happiness of love becomes so customary, so habitual, that it loses by degrees the charm of novelty, and falls into a natural condition, and then the suppressed needs of our nature, our idiosyncrasies of birth or education, reappear and reassert themselves." It is bitterly hard for the man who has worshipped a divinity to realise that the divinity is not of heaven, but of clay, and supremely human. As far as he is concerned, he would have been happier in the sole society of his fancies. It may further be doubted if even the consciousness that she be allied to a man much out of the common can atone to the wife of such a man for the shocks she will probably be made to feel, when the real has ousted the spirit of the ideal out of her husband's mind.

Thoreau seems in many respects to have lived the ideal life for the genius. He himself, however, was not exactly what one would term a genius. He was rather one of the most natural-minded and contemplative men that ever existed. You or I would find it difficult to endure the tedium of such days as contented him to the uttermost. Fancy sitting at the door of your cottage for a dozen hours on end, with your attention concentrated upon the acts and movements of the various birds or domestic animals that might chance to come within the range of your vision! It would seem desperately lazy, to begin with. Out of question, if this were persisted in daily for weeks, and months, and

years, the man himself, if his intellect were unclouded, his conscience clear, and his interest in the humble creatures of Nature's managerie who came before him genuine and sympathetic, could hardly fail to become well acquainted with these birds and quadrupeds, his associates.

But only to very exceptional persons, such as Thoreau himself, could such a life bring the thorough and satisfying peace which is much the same as happiness.

Wordsworth, no doubt, was on intimate terms with Nature; but his intimacy was rather general than particular. He did not inspire in the squirrels and birds of Rydal the confidence which Thoreau's squirrels and birds felt in him. Thoreau seems to have loved them for themselves—at least, as much as it was possible for an intelligent man, with human instincts, to love beings of so different an order. Wordsworth rather praised them as integral parts of a great scheme which was excellent and beneficent alike in all its parts and as a whole.

Some people fancy that the poet's greatest happiness is realised during the moments when inspiration is kindling into form within him. It is improbable in the extreme that this is so. Conception is not an easy or comfortable process. It is a means to an end; not an end in itself. But the "afterwards"—that may be said to compensate for the previous pain and anxiety. To be sure, Charles Lamb was pleased to scoff in his amiable manner at this "calm not unlike content," which at times came over him. "I think," he observed, "it is sometimes more akin to physical stupidity than to a heaven-flowing serenity and peace." But that was his way. It was delightfully characteristic of the man who found his keenest and inexhaustible pleasure, not in the green and gold of meadows and woods, with limpid brooks babbling through them and mirroring the blue and white of the heavens in the clear stream; but in what so many of us—including Wordsworth—prefer to think unendurable as a place of residence, London, to wit:

"Whose dirtiest, drab-frequented alley, and her lowest-bowing tradesman, I," says Lamb, "would not exchange for Skiddaw and Helvellyn. Oh! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops, mercers, hardwaramen, pastry-cooks! Saint Paul's Churchyard, the Strand! Exeter Change! Charing Cross,

with the man upon a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! . . . All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds."

It is pleasant and encouraging to meet with such notions in a man who, though something of a Phillistine of the best kind, was a bit of a genius also.

SOME COINCIDENCES.

WHY is a coincidence rarely mentioned without the prefix "strange"? Are there no coincidences which leave little room for marvel, when we reflect how much smaller and how much rounder the world is getting in these days of twenty-knot steamers and "through" trains which cover the breadth of a continent! Places the distances between which but yesterday represented the uttermost irremediability of separation are now found in the same time-table, or book of fares; international necessity has prescribed a cosmopolitan conformity in maritime symbols, telegraphy, musical notation, chemical symbols and screw-threads; "Volapük," if not yet universally spoken, is an accomplished fact; and the ends of the earth have coalesced. Small wonder is it, then, not only that our chance encounters with acquaintances of long ago are many and oft nowadays, but that chains of intermediary association should be readily developed, linking the circle of our individual lives with these afar off, in some detail of circumstance or environment.

I jot down a few which have occurred within my own personal experience, and which are perhaps sufficiently singular in some respect or another to bear narration. Now, I draw a line between simple and compound coincidences. That the man whom I ran against in Yokohama should nudge my elbow on the Eiffel Tower; that Smith and I both knew Brown; or even that gush of purest satisfaction evoked by the revelation that my maternal grandmother was remotely connected by marriage with the third husband of his great-aunt on the father's side—these, I hold, do not justify a demand upon the reader's attention, and are classified under the former head.

The best example of a simple coincidence

is perhaps that embodied in the old story—vouched for as fact in its main details—of the poor boy who dropped a gold ring entrusted to his care into a stream. Unable to recover it, he ran away, frightened, grew up, and, after many years, returned to the scene of his youthful escapade. Leaning on the bridge over the brook, he indicated to a friend, for whose benefit he was relating the episode, the spot where the ring fell, and on withdrawing the walking-stick which he had used for the purpose from the muddy bottom, found the long-lost ornament on the end of it.

Here, however, are one or two coincidences involving a single factor only, which are odd.

I was making a journey by the Great Western Railway from London to Devonshire, taking with me two live cobras in a box. Four other passengers got into the compartment at Paddington; so, as there was plenty of room in the comfortable, broad-gauge carriage, I placed the box on the seat beside me, reared my arm upon it, and before we were well clear of suburban bricks and mortar, had fallen asleep, as is my wont in railway travelling. A bumped and jerky doze it became, bombarded more and more with chips and wedges of my fellow-passengers' conversation as we got speed on—for we did not stop anywhere before Swindon. The disjointed fragments of talk would of themselves have disturbed me but little; but a collision could hardly have roused me more effectually than did the word *snake*! I had the presence of mind to keep my eyes closed, but listened with all my ears. Yes, there was no doubt about it, they were talking of the cobra di capello.

"There are two of them," said the gentleman who appeared to be acting as showman; "but they are so twined and knotted together that you might think it was only one if their hoods were not spread."

Now, how on earth had they discovered them? My snake-box had nothing about it externally to indicate its character, not even a visible scrap of perforated zinc. It was, to the best of my belief, securely locked; and, besides, my elbow had leaned upon it the whole way. I would not run any risk whereby people might be frightened; moreover, I am too fond of these poor brutes to wantonly add to their unpopularity by permitting their promiscuous appearance in society. No mischance short of actual crushing force could,

I felt assured, have injured their cage, and what would break that would kill the inmates.

I listened a minute longer, and the mystery was explained. The gentleman held in his hand an elaborately-carved stick, which I recognised as one of the insignia carried in the Samee dances of Ceylon, from which country it appeared he had just returned. Two cobras, the principal emblem of the rite, were twisted around the staff, and he was demonstrating the position and signification of these to the three passengers whose curiosity had been excited by the quaint carving.

I woke up, gradually joined in the discussion, ventured politely to dissent on a point of structure, and then, withdrawing the shutter of my box—beneath which was a good panel of plate-glass—appealed to Nature for corroboration. And if I found no fellow-ophiomaniac amongst my four companions, they proved, at any rate, very chatty and agreeable over this strange coincidence.

Two other coincidences are associated in my mind with the Royal Mail Steam-ship "Elbe," or with my period of connection with her. At Fort Augusta, in Jamaica, one of the defences of Kingston Harbour, on the opposite side of the inlet of Port Royal, is shown the tomb of a negro who, in a great earthquake, was swallowed up, and apparently buried alive in a chasm which was opened under his feet. A moment later, another convulsion threw him out on the surface again, undamaged but for a few bruises, scratches and scars, and he lived for many years afterwards. The other occurred at Colon, the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Railway. We were lying at that pestiferous port for a day, and I had taken the opportunity of running across the Isthmus in quest of pearls, which, I had heard, were sometimes to be picked up at a bargain in Panama. No pearls, however, could I discover on that occasion, so I returned by the afternoon train, and contented myself until we sailed by looking at tongues, and feeling pulses, and filling my pockets with vile Peruvian dollars, for there were no doctors at Colon in those days.

That night at dinner I was alluding to the non-success of my errand when, as I spoke, something grated between my teeth. It was a pearl! Diligent investigation was rewarded by the prize of two more in the oyster-patty which I was eating—all three worthless, it is true, but sufficiently

historical to warrant their preservation in a scarf-pin. The oyster, I need hardly say, belonged to that celebrated tinned genus which included so many species of organic matters used as food on board our ocean-going liners before steam-refrigerators ministered to the luxury of those upon the deep; and the best of the joke was that when the stewards heard of my find, they carefully overhauled every tin of oysters before it was committed to the galley, and obtained one or two enormous specimens which they believed to be of priceless value. But they were only lumps of solder from the sealing of the tin!

A relative of mine told me a funny thing about that Panama railroad—not exactly a coincidence, but something like one.

In crossing, once upon a time, they were delayed owing to the line being blocked at the very summit of the incline, from the top of which you first look down upon the Pacific. A heavy burst of rain had washed a quantity of earth across the metals in the cutting. As my relative stood there upon the platform of one of the cars, watching the men clear away the débris from the track, he noticed a tiny stream, one of many which were plashing down the steep sides of the cutting; at the lower part of its fall a pebble divided it, and half its dribble ran westward down to Panama, while the other half went east to swell the Atlantic Ocean.

I was leaning over the high balcony outside a second-floor window of one of the lofty trapiches or warehouses looking upon the harbour, in the malodorous lower town of Bahia in Brazil, one broiling hot morning. On the simmering pavement far below was an expectant little black boy, for I had had the misfortune to receive in change out of a milreis note, a greasy rouleau of horrible cankerous coppers, from which one's pockets instinctively revolted. Therefore I had idly dropped them one by one to the small child of Ham beneath, whose thick, white soles pattered in chase of them over stones which would have cooked anything less inflammable than a nigger, for these thin, broad coins opened to him a glittering prospect of caju, mangoes, and doces galore. I withheld the last till his attention was diverted from me, intending to hit with it the broad brim of the grass hat which was the chief portion of his attire. Presently he turned and looked up towards the market-place, dubious as to whether

more reis would descend on him from the balcony, and chinking those which he held in his loosely closed hand. I sighed, missed his hat, and the copper passed between his fingers to join the others in his palm. When he felt the jerk, and found his store increased, he appeared to think the "European Officer" a wonderfully good shot.

Now for a couple of compound instances, where the points of concurrence have been more continuous in identity and complicated.

Many years ago I journeyed from Havana to Vera Cruz with a man of about my own age, but whose knowledge of the world so far transcended mine, that I was but as a child beside him in experience. He was a roving spirit, never doing much good for himself, nor coming to great harm—a younger son of a very old English family. We went up the Orizaba mountain together as far as the town which bears its name; and there we parted—he going on to the city of Mexico, I turning off to Pueblo.

About eighteen months later I was in Guatemala, and suddenly bethought me to ask a merchant, in whose office I happened to be when the idea occurred to me, whether he knew anything of my former travelling companion, whom I had vaguely heard had gone down into that country coffee-planting. As I spoke, a pile of blankets in a corner became animated, and a figure, which I had not observed, slowly rose and staggered forward with tottering steps.

"I thought I recognised you, though you have grown a beard!" he said.

Poor fellow! I should never have known him, worn as he was to a yellow skeleton with the consuming fever and ague of the land. In a few minutes he reeled back to his rug again. I could do nothing for him but give him all the quinine I had with me, for I was just on the verge of my departure.

I left him, shocked at his pitiable condition, and never expecting to see him again alive. Judge, then, of my astonishment when, years afterwards, I arrived in the outer roadstead of Buenos Ayres, and the first person to step on board from the little tender, the "Tejedor," was my old acquaintance, no longer fever-stricken, though seedy of apparel. He gave me a narrative of many vicissitudes and adventures by sea and land since our last meeting, and confided that he was then

supporting a bare existence on a very limited number of paper dollars per month, earned by his exertions as reporter for a newspaper, until something better should turn up. That amelioration of conditions was effected before I left the city. Such little influence as I possessed was sufficient to get him a clerkship in one of the largest shipping agencies in the "25th of May Street," and we parted with many protestations of regard.

Alas! the next report I had of him was one of fierce denunciation mingled with stormy reproaches heaped upon my own head. Entrusted with a sum of money for transference to one of the steamers, he had absconded, and was gone none knew whither—though there was an indefinite sort of rumour that he had worked his passage as stoker on board a vessel bound to the Cape for ostriches.

Whether this was so or not I never discovered; but I may mention that, by searching enquiry, I elicited that his disappearance was productive rather of inconvenience than actual loss to his employers, the amount which he had taken being small, and nearly proportionate to his unpaid salary and the value of his few belongings which he left behind. I fully believe from what I had seen of the fellow that he considered he was striking a rough balance, and was no thief.

Not long ago I missed the last train down from Euston, and walked on and took a room for the night at an hotel, the name of which I do not give for obvious reasons. Wanting a few sheets of paper and some envelopes, I was referred to an office in the hall, behind the half-frosted window of which a very sleepy clerk sat at a desk. I preferred my request, and was watching the packing of the lift with luggage while I presumed that he was attending to my wants, when the lid of the desk was slammed down with a crash, and the man bolted out of the office, leaving the paper and envelopes scattered about the counter at the window. I caught but a glimpse at him; but the impression flashed upon me at once that it was my friend so oft encountered out West. Coming to the window with the paper he had probably recognised me, and, on the impulse of the moment, had turned and fled.

I have never seen or heard of him since, for I feared to do him an injury by asking questions about him; but to complete this curious chapter of accidents I breakfasted

not many days afterwards in that very hotel with one of the partners of the firm with whom he had been engaged in Buenos Ayres. To him I told the whole story, only suppressing the fact that we were probably at that moment seated under the same roof with the clerk who had absconded from him at the other side of the world.

Very early one morning I stood at the first-opened refreshment bar in Waterloo Station, having a cup of coffee. At the other end of the counter was another customer similarly engaged.

"How's your foot?" I called out to him, presently.

"What do you mean?" he growled back, when I had made it quite unmistakable that the question was addressed to him.

"Haven't you had some bone taken out of your heel?" I queried, between the gulps of my hot coffee.

"What business is that of yours, sir!" angrily demanded the early bird, now thoroughly exasperated by my impertinence.

"Because I took it out for you!" I explained.

So I had, years before, in China.

A man treated me badly in Rio de Janeiro. There is no need to go into the rights and wrongs of the business, or to detail any of the circumstances of the quarrel, since all that is outside the involved series of coincidences. Suffice it to say I could obtain no justice or redress, and that I left there with an unpleasant consciousness of having come off very much second best. The day before my departure, having sought this man vainly at his office in town, I took the tram to Botafogo, and did a baking climb up the Novo Mundo Hill, on the top of which his house was picturesquely perched. He received me, he inside, I outside the locked gate of his courtyard. When I had had my say, and he his, I told him dramatically that the world was small, and that we should meet again. He withdrew into his cool, green-jaloused verandah with a sarcastic laugh, and I wended my way down the roasting, rocky path, discomfited.

But there is a Nemesis of public opinion, even among the faction-riven cliques of Rio English. The vox populi was against him. I left plenty of good friends behind me, and the current was more than my antagonist could stem. Three months

later he cleared out, bag and baggage, went to the States, and was heard of in Brazil no more.

Another seven years at least must have passed away, when one drizzling afternoon my course around Southampton Docks was impeded by the fact of the swing-bridges being open to allow of the great Union Steamer, sailing that day for South Africa, being hauled out of the inner basin. As I loitered restlessly on the edge of the quay while she forged slowly by, Mr. D.'s face glided slowly past within three feet of mine, as he leaned over the German's rail. Mutual recognition lighted up our vacant eyes at the same moment, and I made a leap and caught the nothing.

"I told you it was a small world, my friend," I said, as I clambered over the rail on to the quarter-deck. There was a scene; but of course, I had to go ashore again in a few minutes, while he, calm and triumphant, pursued his way to the sunny south.

Less than twelve months since, I found myself with twenty minutes to wait for a train at the Sloane Square Station of the Underground Railway, and concluded to improve that shining interval by having lunch. Two men came into the refreshment-room while I was there, and called for something at the bar. I knew the voice and did not look round, though I caught sight of his face in the mirror behind the bottles and glasses; but I said quietly over my shoulder:

"It's a small world, Mr. D.!"

I was not prepared, however, for what followed. He gasped, and turned rather white; then dashed at my hand, and shook it effusively.

"My dear fellow, how are you, how are you! Who would have thought of seeing you here! Come, what are you going to have! Going by train! Must you really! But I do so want to have a long talk with you. Come and look me up—wait, let me give you my address." He pencilled it in his pocket-book, tore out the leaf and gave it to me. "Now you will come, won't you, *sin falta*, as we used to say, eh!" and so he rattled on with nervous agitation, at which I could not help simply smiling until I left. The explanation no doubt was that it was highly important for him to keep the relations between us from the knowledge of the elderly gentleman with him, whoever that may have been. Somehow, I didn't feel that I had come

off quite so badly that third time. The address, of course, was false.

At vingt-et-un I once saw the dealer pay a player twenty-eight times the original stake. Four or five Americans were seated at the table, and they played, I think, with three packs of cards mixed. The dealer, when he saw his own card, doubled the stakes. One player "went" on both his cards, but, on receiving the two next, turned the four over, and declared his intention of going on—all—they were all four kings. Fortune favoured him to such an extent that on three of these the cards ran out twenty-one, and on the fourth nineteen. The dealer had two aces, and seeing the desperate odds against him, resolved to fight on both, with the result that both "burst." Thus his indebtedness to this one player alone amounted to eight-and-twenty times the sum which the latter had first announced as his stake.

It was a strange coincidence that I should sit opposite to a man at the table-d'hôte at "Beckwith's Hotel," in Georgetown, Demerara, I feeling perfectly certain that I had seen him somewhere before, and he as obviously recognising me, yet neither of us able to "place" the other; that we should drift by each other again in the crush and crowd of the landing-stage at New Orleans, and again have no opportunity of speaking; and that finally we should be introduced to each other on coming out of a church in a quiet Berkshire village by some relations of mine, then to discover that we had been fellow-students at Saint George's Hospital, meeting every day, but never speaking, according to the rigid etiquette which prescribed no communication between men of different years' entry.

We had a white cat, who was my especial pet. It was not a beautiful cat, nor an amiable cat, nor a very honest cat—not by any means; but Barabbas attached himself to me, and was always to be found on my chair when I came home for my very late dinner, and took charge of me generally. He was a small cat of peculiar and ungainly shape, and having one blue eye and one of normal greenish-grey. One day he was taken ill with symptoms of poisoning; for many days he lay about, refusing all food, and his coat, which had been his one good feature, became thin and mangy. The poor creature wasted miserably in spite of all that could be done for him; and while we

were deliberating as to the most merciful course to pursue, he solved the difficulty by disappearing: crawling away, in all probability, to some retreat to die—where, we never discovered.

About twelve weeks after this, the baby trotted into the dining-room one day announcing, in his own tongue, that "Abou" was on the stairs. I could hardly believe my eyes; but there he was, ghastly, thin, and so weak that he could hardly stand. There was the same high-arched back, the same thick, coarse fur, and the two odd eyes. The mystery was increased by the fact of the weather having been, during those twelve weeks, the bitterest of the whole winter. All manners of theories were framed to account for Barabbas's whereabouts; and I entered the circumstance in my notebook as an instance of "Remarkable Tenacity of Life in a Cat."

Needless to say that we nursed and fed

him up, and in a short time he was strong enough to be able to steal everything within the pale of feline possibilities, as of yore. Certainly he seemed to have forgotten some of the traits and habits which were distinctive of him before his disappearance. But as I sat one night looking at him while he gazed expectant into my face, I suddenly remembered that his blue eye was on the wrong side.

A whimsical train of sleepy fancy, too ridiculous to be set down here, had fixed the relative positions of the eyes of the true Barabbas in my mind. Here, then, was a case of mistaken identity; but an extraordinary coincidence, none the less that the unwitting little impostor was, in all probability, a kitten of the same mother as his double—that matron having transmitted her parti-coloured ocular peculiarity to a numerous progeny in the neighbourhood.

NOTE.—In Number 107 of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Third Series, there appeared an article called "A Real Treasure Hunt," which was based on Mr. Knight's excellent and entertaining book, "The Cruise of the Alerts," published by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. The writer inadvertently omitted to acknowledge his indebtedness to Mr. Knight's book, or to give its title and the other necessary particulars in a footnote, as is usual in such cases. The present note has for its object the reparation of the error, with the expression of my regret to Mr. Knight that it should have occurred.—*Ed.* ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

On the 28th of MARCH will be commenced a

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No. 114.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1891. PRICE TWOPENCE.

"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dams Durdan," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V. TOSSED ON TROUBLED SEAS.

ALL night I lay awake in my little cabin, listening to the murmur of the water against the sides of the yacht, and hearing over and over again those words of Huel Penryth. They were wise words and true, and worth remembering. I told myself it was foolish to waste life over a broken dream; foolish to give myself over to imagination and romance; foolish to suffer as I still suffered for sake of that long dead youth of mine from which I had parted with such bitter tears. What was to be gained now by dreams so vain as those I had of late indulged! A miserable, feverish emotion, a restless discontent—mind and body on the rack. Was Penryth right when he said that I had wilfully chosen my own misery, wilfully closed my eyes to what life meant for me!

The wrench of that sudden parting had hurt me less than I had once believed possible. It had also opened my eyes to a danger to which I had been blindly drifting. My cheeks grew hot with sudden shame even here in the night's quiet darkness as I thought of that self-betrayal.

"I can't understand it," I said to myself, helplessly. "Oh, if he had only kept away! Why did he return! Why did he give me all this suffering to bear over again! It was cruel—it was very cruel!"

The tears rolled down in a weak and

childish fashion; I seemed to have lost the self-control and hardness which had restrained emotion through those past days and hours.

"It will have to be fought all over again," I thought; "just as I believed that I had conquered and was safe. And it is so much harder now! Oh, why do we love—why, why!"

Alas! there is no answer to that question, save that it is a law of the life we own.

The bitter shame and humiliation of it all stabbed me with cruel pain. To live, laugh, talk, to face other eyes, play at composure and indifference, and all the time to bear the tortures of longing and regret! That was what love had given me to bear. Oh, why could I not forget! Why could I not kill this pain and fever out of my heart! "It is not even as if he were worthy, or very good," I told myself. "He is no hero; he has been selfish, reckless, cruel from the first; but yet I shall never love any other half so well."

Yet even as I said it, I knew that I must brace every energy and every nerve to fight down this passion which had now become a sin. I could scarcely understand how from relentlessness I had turned to compassion, from anger to pity; how I had allowed myself to drift back to the old weakness and the old danger from which I had believed myself so far removed.

All my better instincts rebelled; all pride and dignity of womanhood rebuked me for the self-betrayal of that last morning on the hill-side, when the veil of silence had been rent between us two. And the shame of discovery, the knowledge that not only Huel Penryth but the Laird himself had guessed something of what

had caused Douglas Hay's abrupt departure, filled me with a great dismay.

Perhaps in a measure they served to brace my energies afresh, to make me see things in that fierce light of reflection from the minds of others, which is at once a revelation and a warning.

There is a moment in life when conviction pierces the veil of all subterfuge; the past and the present confront us; we see clearly at last, and truth forces acknowledgement from heart and lip. That moment was mine now.

I had escaped a great peril. My life felt broken and unstrung; but I was realising by slow and sure degrees that life's hours could not be passed in vain regrets and vain longings. I was unhappy; but I was not alone in my unhappiness. Others had fought the same weary battle, others would fight it long after life had ceased for me.

"Is pain over then?" I wondered, turning fevered brow and tear-wet eyes to the waking dawn.

And my heart whispered, "Not unless death kills memory too."

The Laird had made but brief comment on Douglas's sudden departure; but the girls were loud in lamentation and regret.

"And he has missed the very best of the trip," had been the regretful remark of pretty Jessie M'Kaye, as the yacht made its way up to Skye, breasting the blue waters like some beautiful white bird.

We passed through Loch Etive, and then made for the Sound of Mull. The weather was still perfect, forcing me to recant my opinions of the Scotch climate. The blue sky and warm sunlight brought out all the soft tints and colours of the hills, and the hues of bracken and fern, and the pearly grey of the rocks, and the dappled cloud-shadows that floated across the deep valleys, and wild, dark stretches of mist.

It was intensely lovely amidst that ever-changing panorama of mountain, and hill, and forest, and sea. Scarce even a boat would break the monotony of the great, foam-flecked stretch of waters, and the moan of breaking waves was only echoed by the wilder and more mournful plaint of the sea birds.

The loneliness and sadness oppressed me in a vague and melancholy way. The girls were merry enough. It mattered

little to them, apparently, whether skies were grey or blue, if storm threatened, or sunlight smiled. But to me it seemed that physical pain would have been easier to bear than this dull ache, this constant sense of repression, and the haunting dread that I had betrayed myself to others.

The Laird's candid eyes and bluff, honest face seemed to me to have acquired a gravity and suspicion hitherto a stranger to them. He almost avoided me, and whenever we anchored and went on shore, as we so frequently did if opportunity offered, I seemed to be always left to the escort and companionship of Huel Penryth.

We had had a month now of this idle, monotonous life; steering our course according to fancy, instead of following the tourist's usual track. At Tobermory the weather suddenly changed, and we were advised to wait for three or four days until the gale had spent itself.

It was very dull and dreary in the little inn, watching the storm-clouds drift over the dull, grey sky, and the rain beating incessantly on the window-panes, and listening to the wild warfare of wind and waves, as their fierce music filled the air through the long days and longer nights.

Sleep and I seemed to have become strangers to one another, and the strain on mind and action began to show itself in a certain feverish unrest. I grew paler and thinner every day, and often I saw Bella eyeing me anxiously, as if she read the change but did not like to question it. She herself seemed perfectly happy and content, and her merry laugh and face were as good as sunshine and sea-breezes to us all. It struck me at this time that the eyes of Robert M'Kaye, the Laird's friend, had acquired a curious habit of watching and following her about. As for the two girls, they seemed to idolise her, and were never happy away from her.

I thought sometimes that it would be strange if she accepted the position of step-mother, and went back with them to Australia.

I hinted this laughingly to her one evening, and was not a little surprised at the blushes and confusion that responded to my raillery.

"He is a very good man, and a very kind one," she said. "I'm not sure but what I might do worse, Athole."

"Do you think you would be happy?"

I asked, somewhat wistfully. The fact of losing her also out of my life made it take a graver and more gloomy aspect.

"Well, I'm not a romantic body like yourself," she said, laughing, "and I'm very fond of the M'Kays, one and all, and of all things I should love to go to Australia. I'm not exactly desirous of spending all my days in Scotland."

And these were reasons for marrying! Well, I suppose they were as good as those of many other girls, and Bella's was a safe and sensible nature. She would never be wrecked and tempest-tossed on seas of wild and passionate emotion, never fret heart and soul with love, and jealousy, and fierce anger, and agonised despair as I had done.

"I know he is a very good, kind man," I said, at last; "but he is old enough to be your father, Bella."

"Oh, what of that!" she said, lightly. "I'm not of the sort that falls in love with foolish laddies and such like feckless beings. They're only a trouble and a vexation to me. I've always made up my mind to have a sensible, middle-aged husband, and here's my chance. Besides," she added, with a twinkle in her bright eyes, "when you are a member of a large family it really becomes a duty to relieve your parents of the burden of supporting you longer than is absolutely necessary. And you know, my dear, there's not an atom of sentiment or romance in my composition. I simply couldn't fret, and fume, and dream, and poetise about a man. It may seem very odd, but I couldn't. It isn't in me."

"No," I said, "I don't believe it is. You will go down to your grave, laughing. It is an enviable disposition, but I cannot understand it."

She looked at me keenly, and with a sudden gravity replacing the laughter in her eyes.

"What has come to you, lately, Athole?" she said. "You don't look well, and your spirits are as uncertain as—well, as the weather. Are you wearying of the trip already—or—is it because Douglas Hay left us?"

I felt my face flush hotly.

"Bella," I said, "all that is over and done with. Do not speak of it again. I don't mind confessing that I am unhappy—very unhappy; but that is no new thing. I think my mind is a morbid and dissatisfied one. I have always wanted so much more out of life than it can give. That is a mistake. Perhaps, as I grow

older, I shall grow wiser. I'm sure I need to."

"You seemed much brighter and happier when you first set out," she said.

"Have I not just told you that my nature is altogether wrong?" I said, bitterly. "I grow tired of everything and every one. I am always wanting to know, and to analyse, and to experience; and then when I do get any deeper into a feeling, or the meaning of any action, I feel so disappointed. It never seems a bit like what I imagined it would be."

Bella shook her head reproachfully.

"Foolish," she said. "How often must I say it! What a pity, little coz, that you were not one of a large family. You would soon have all dreaming and sentimentality knocked out of you; depend upon it, life is safer and more wholesome when household duties and occupations demand your attention. I have never had time for fretting, or repining, or 'analysing,' as you call it, and I am sure, I am quite sure, that life is a happier, more satisfactory thing for me than it has been or can be for you."

I looked at the bright face, the clear, honest eyes, the perfect content and genuine good-humour of the whole expression.

"You are quite right, Bella," I said, with a faint sigh of envy. "It has been and it will be happier always."

CHAPTER VI. "POOR LASSIE!"

BEFORE we left Tobermory it was all arranged. Bella was to marry Robert M'Kaye, and return with him and his daughters to his sheep-run in the Eura district at the end of their year's holiday. She wrote to her folk in Inverness to acquaint them with the news, evidently taking their consent for granted, as did also the calm, sensible Scotchman, whose wooing had been conducted on the matter-of-fact and rational principles peculiar to his nation. I regarded them both with feelings of curiosity and wonder. The change in their relative positions did not seem to make any difference in their manner to one another. Robert M'Kaye gave as much of his attention to the Laird as to his affianced bride; and she laughed and jested, and took life in just the same careless, unembarrassed manner as ever. The girls looked upon her as a sister, and the new relationship apparently pleased them greatly.

I think that I was the only one who did not approve of it, though I refrained from saying so. But I knew I should feel very lonely without my merry, good-natured cousin; and the thought of the wide seas separating us could only be a mournful and unwelcome thought to me.

At last the skies cleared, and the rain showed signs of ceasing, so we sailed out of Tobermory Bay and made for Loch Scavaig and Coruik, with the intention of seeing the wonders of these wild places, and the Spa Cave and Glen Sligachan. I heard the Laird telling Huel Penryth of the desolate and awful grandeur of this wild island, of its black, silent waters, its jagged, twisted rocks, and of all the sombre and ghostly loneliness that there held endless sovereignty. Perhaps those graphic pictures produced a deep impression on my mind. I know the place affected me profoundly. We seemed gliding into a dark and unknown prison, from whence escape would be impossible. The melancholy and sleeplessness from which I had suffered took stronger hold on me. Sometimes I was afraid that I should fall ill, and I longed to ask the Laird to turn back, to leave this wild and fearful place, and take me home to Corriemoor again.

When I stood on deck in the cold, grey twilight that here had none of summer's warmth or brightness, I could not repress a shudder of aversion.

"Ye're no admiring it, Athole, I'm thinking," said the Laird, coming to my side, his hands in the pockets of his rough tweed suit, the unfailing pipe in his mouth.

"No," I said, with unflattering alacrity, "I think it is an awful place."

"Oh! nonsense; it's just grand," he said, heartily, "a bit gloomy perhaps after sunset; but wait till to-morrow, and you'll no be so ready to find fault. A dash of sunshins makes a' the difference."

I was silent.

It seemed impossible to fancy the sun bold enough to flash any warmth or brightness over the great black shoulders of Garsven, or lighting the desolate lake waters that reflected only low and riven rocks, and echoed no more cheerful sound than the call of the water-fowl, or the hollow murmurs of the wind.

The yacht lay motionless in the deep, dark loch. All around were towering mountains and the wild fantastic forms of cliff and rock, while as the twilight deepened, a pale blue mist gathered over the heights, and floated down like a veil

with which the mountain spirits had chosen to shut in their haunted solitudes.

The Laird's voice again broke the silence.

"I'm afraid," he said, "that you're not enjoying the trip as much as you fancied, but it will soon be over. No doubt," he added, presently, "it's a bit dull now there's none o' the singing, and the dancing, and story-telling we aye got from young Douglas Hay."

I felt my cheeks flush with sudden warmth.

"I have not found it dull," I said, quickly, "and I have enjoyed the whole trip immensely; but I cannot say I like this part of it."

"It would be a pity did we no see the Spa Cave now we are so far on our way," he said.

"Oh, by all means let us see whatever ought to be seen," I said, with forced cheerfulness, "I should be sorry to interfere with the plans you have made."

"But you must not think I would make any plans that might not please you," he said, gravely, "I planned this trip for your sake. I really did wish to give you a little pleasure. After all, Corriemoor is but a dull place for a young thing—I ought to have remembered that long ago."

I was almost too startled to speak; I had never heard him express such concern or interest in my life. He had always seemed to take for granted that my tastes were identified with his own, and subservient to his wishes.

"You are very good," I said, hurriedly; "and pray—pray do not think this has not been a great pleasure to me. It is only that lately I have not been quite strong or well, and here it is so bleak and cold. I am rather like a swallow for southern latitudes," I added, with a little nervous laugh, as I saw how grave his face looked.

There was a long silence, uncomfortably long it seemed to me, used as I was to the Laird's "silent bars" as I called them.

Then quite suddenly he laid his hand on my shoulder, the big, rough hand that had never pleased my fastidious tastes. Its touch now was very gentle, and there was something almost deprecating in the glance that met my own. A faint gleam of moonlight fell upon his face through the parting mists that veiled the sky. It was pale, serious, almost distressed.

"Poor lassie!" he said, very softly—and turned away.

I remained there leaning against the side of the yacht. I was trembling greatly. I wondered what had caused that sudden tenderness—that look of compassion. Had he really read something of my miserable secret, and did he now attribute the change in me to Douglas Hay's departure? The thought stabbed me with sharp and bitter shame. Perhaps he now was repenting of the mistake he had made—perhaps he, too, recognised the fact that our marriage was altogether unsuitable.

Looking back on its brief years I could not say that I had shown myself very loving, or very companionable; but then, on the other hand, he had been to the full as engrossed in his own pursuits and occupations as I in my sorrows and my dreams. He had never seemed to want me. There was very little sympathy between us—that subtle undercurrent of mutual liking and comprehension which makes two natures agree so easily, and understand so readily what pleases or interests or absorbs each.

He had been unobservant, and I had been reticent. He had passed his life in his old, accustomed manner, and no doubt believed that I was perfectly content with him, forgetting how new and strange it must have seemed, and how dull and commonplace it must have been for a young girl, who had no society, no companions, and could not find engrossing interest in mere household drudgery.

"Oh, what a mistake it has been!" I said to myself now, with a bitterness born of intense hopelessness. "Why did he not take my first 'no,' and believe it; or why was I so foolish as to yield? We could not have been more unhappy; but we might so easily have been less."

Even as I thought it, I felt a warm shawl wrapped about my shoulders. The Laird had returned again. I looked up gratefully.

"Thank you, Donald," I said.

I so seldom called him by his name, that I suppose it surprised him. His quick glance met mine with a flash of sudden pleasure.

"You've been aye long standing there, Athole," he said. "Will ye not walk a bit now, unless you prefer to go below? The others are at card-playing and fortune-telling, and such like foolishness."

"Oh, I don't care to go below," I said; "and the night is getting clear. How wonderfully white the stars look!" I added, in amazement, as I looked up at the sky, which now seemed of a curious lambent green, unlike anything I had ever seen before.

A faint wind brought with it the song of distant streams travelling seawards from the far-off mountain heights. The solemn stillness of the night held no other sound.

"They always look white up here," said the Laird; "I suppose it is something in the atmosphere. The place does not look so weird and strange now, does it? And when you see it to-morrow in the sunshine you'll think it's just wonderful, wi' all the colours of the coast, and the rocks, and the clouds, and the loch reflecting them like a mirror. No doubt you think I'm over fond of praising my own land," he added, presently; "but I suppose it's but natural to a Scotchman."

"I think it's a very pardonable pride," I said; "I had no idea there was such beautiful scenery to be found in these wild regions."

"There's M'Kaye, now," he went on, complacently; "he's travelled eno' to ken what scenery is like, and what foreign countries are worth. He'll no be content ever again in them. He's made up his mind to retire from business, and lay his bones to rest here in his native land."

I laughed involuntarily.

"He ought not to talk of laying his bones to rest as a reason for his return," I said. "What about Bella?"

"No doubt," he answered, gravely; "she will do him good and stir him up a bit. He's of a somewhat grave and desponding nature."

"Well, she certainly is the very opposite," I said. "I always look upon her as a cure for low spirits and dulness."

"You'll be missing her, I fear," he said, somewhat anxiously.

"Indeed, yes," was my candid and somewhat sorrowful response. "I am fonder of her than of any of my other cousins."

"Or—or any one else here, I often think," he said, with an odd, harsh, little laugh.

I looked at him astonished. Was it possible, conceivable even, that he should mind my partiality?

"She is so bright, and has such a happy, contented nature," I said, "and she has always been so good to me."

"Have not other folk been—that?" he asked, suddenly.

There was uneasiness in his tone; but his eyes as I met their glance were very kind and very anxious.

"Oh yes," I said, cheerfully, "you surely do not imagine that I am finding fault with any of my kinsfolk."

"Athole," he said, stopping abruptly, and half facing me in the clear, pale moonlight, "how old are you?"

"More than twenty now," I answered. "What made you ask?"

"I—I hardly know," he said, resuming his walk by my side. "Perhaps it was something M'Kaye said when he first saw you. And yet he's not proved himself much wiser. There's no' such a very great difference between your age and Bella Cameron's; only she's so big, and fine, and womanly, and has a managing way wi' her that you could never get—I'm thinking."

"Would you like me to get it?" I asked, laughing in spite of myself at the idea. "Because I could ask Bella to teach me—you know."

He shook his head gravely.

"No, my dear—I would not have you changed—only—only——"

"Only what?" I said quickly, struck by something sad and almost regretful in his voice.

"Only," he said, huskily, "I wish that I could set you free again, and see your face as it used to look, without that wistful, haunting shadow upon it. It's not a pleasant thought to me, my dear, that I brought it there."

"Oh, Donald!" I cried, impulsively.

A little catch in my breath frightened me. I must not break down; yet I was so weak, and nervous, and unstrung, that I could scarcely command myself. I only longed to lean my head against that strong arm I held, and sob out my misery and loneliness as a frightened child might have done. But what could I say that he would understand? And what would he ask that I could never explain?

Between us there had always been a barrier; and now it seemed to me that something of shame lurked in the background of these widening months of coldness and estrangement. The time had gone by for frank confidence. Regret and sorrow were all that he could feel for the mistake he had made; that in some way had made itself plain to him at last.

So I controlled myself by a strong

effort; and he, waiting patiently for the conclusion of that impulsive sentence, must have felt that I had no will for confidence. Silence fell between us again—silence the brief span of which was filled with doubt and sorrow, till broken by the voices and the presence of others.

They were trooping up on deck, chattering and laughing, and full of admiring wonder at the scene before them. The lights of the yacht were shining on spar and rigging, and threw dancing reflections on the dark, rippling water. The stars had grown larger and whiter as the night came on. There was a far-off sound of unseen waves, and the cry of the sea-birds still fluttering recklessly from rock to rock.

"No one has brought us the promised plumage of those wonderful birds we heard so much of," I said, turning to the Laird. "I suppose the fowling-pieces in the saloon are only for ornament?"

"Indeed, no," he said, eagerly. "Were you wanting a wing or two? I would have got them for you long ago. But these are common sort of birds. A heron or a guillemot, now, would be worth having."

"You'll hardly get the guillemot here, will you?" said M'Kaye.

"There's no saying," the Laird answered. "Out seawards, yonder, we might pick up wi' some. I won't forget," he added, looking at me.

"But I'm not so very anxious," I explained, eagerly; "and if it's any trouble—or risk——"

He laughed his bluff, hearty laugh.

"Tut, tut, lassie, don't faash yourself. It's a poor creature Donald Campbell would be if he could na' manage boat and gun at his time of life. You shall hae your bird before we turn south again. It's no' often ye ask me for anything."

There was a look in his face and his eyes as I met them under the white lustre of the shining stars which I had never seen before—which was destined to haunt me for many a long day to come.

PHOEBE

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"FIVE years penal servitude."

That was the judge's sentence at the end of old George Lister's trial, and I don't think there was a soul in the Court, except George Lister himself, who was in any

wisely inclined to quarrel with it. Indeed, taking into account all the worry and bother we keepers had had over him ever since I'd been in Lord Bewley's service—now a matter of six months—and the damage he done to Mr. Ellis, the head-keeper, the night we caught him down by Bewley Water, with a bag of birds over his shoulder—considering all this, I don't think that I, for one, should have looked on it as unreasonable if the sentence had been seven years, or even ten. At one moment I had been well nigh afraid he'd be let off a great deal too easy; and I truly believe if it hadn't been for my evidence, which the judge told the Court was very clear and well given, that he'd have only had twelve months at the outside.

He was aware of that himself, and when the police were taking him from the dock, he turned to where I was standing, and said, out loud enough for all who listened to hear him:

"Evan Barry, you've done your best to spoil what is left of my life, and to ruin them as I care for, so if an old man's curse can do you any harm, don't you look for any good luck to befall you."

"You've no one to blame but yourself, George Lister," I answered, nothing moved, "for what's fallen on you. As to me, the good I shall get by being rid of you on my beat will more than make up for any bad luck your curses can bring me."

Then the constables hurried him out, and I went out of the Court and down to the railway station.

From Winchester to Bewley isn't so far as the crow flies; but it's an awkward bit of ground to get over. Our case had lasted till late in the afternoon, and by the time I had taken the train to Southampton, and the ferry across the water, it was getting dusk, for it was the latter end of September, when the days are drawing in. Moreover, the evening was chill, so I left the wooden pier and started along the Bewley road at a brisk pace. I had six miles between me and my supper, and I was in no small hurry to tell the story of the trial to Mr. Ellis, the head-keeper, who was still laid up with that knock on the head which he got from George Lister's gun. I knew he'd be as pleased as I was to think of Lister safe in Winchester Gaol, and of the lesson it'd be to the rest of the poaching scamps who lived on the outskirts of Bewley Manor.

Thinking over the course of the day, I got to the top of the hill, where the fenced

land comes to an end and Bewley Heath begins. Here I pulled myself together for a fresh spurt. I had no mind to let the grass grow under my feet across the heath, which is by no means a canny road after nightfall, especially when your gun and your dogs are at home, and you have nothing but a thick stick in your hand.

I've heard people say, some as should have known better, too, that Bewley Heath is a beautiful place. Now I've seen country enough to be something of a judge, but for the life of me I can't see where the beauty of it comes in. All I make of it is a piece of wild common land, stretching out flat and dreary beneath storm and sun, where nothing grows but gorse and heather, and just here and there, by the little bits of ponds, a group of brambles and a couple of stunted birches. Besides which, handsome is as handsome does, and the heath has a name bad enough to set any reasonable, law-abiding man against it. I've heard from people who belong to those parts—which I don't myself—that, not so very long ago, it was not safe to go unarmed or alone along the bleak, bare roads that cross it, and though those days are over, the heath folk have still a name for wildness and lawlessness. If they had been tenants of his lordship, there might perhaps have been a remedy found; but the Manor stops short at the heath, and the squatters who had built bits of hovels on the edge of the common land were freeholders of the Crown, and much as Lord Bewley would have liked to turn one or two of them adrift, he'd no more power to do it than they had to turn him out of the Manor House.

The heath roads were always lonely enough, so it was no wonder for me to walk that evening more than half way across without seeing a living creature except the forest donkeys and ponies among the heather; when, suddenly, I was aware of voices a little distance from the road, and, as I pulled up to listen, a woman's figure rose up from the scrub, and called to me to stop.

"Who are you?" I shouted back, "and what do you want?"

"I want help," was the answer, "if you're in the humour to give it."

It was not a voice I knew, but the sound of it caught my fancy, and, little as I should have been minded two minutes before to turn aside from my homeward way, I was ready and willing enough to

make further acquaintance with her as called me.

"What is it you want help for?" I asked, when I'd come through the gorse to where she stood, doing my best at the same time to see what she was like, which wasn't easy, seeing that it was almost dark.

"I want you to give me a hand with this poor boy," she said; "there, take care where you're going, or you'll tread on him. Here," she went on, bending down, "here he's been lying this hour or more, and every time I go to move him he screams, else I'd have carried him home long ago, far as it is."

While she was speaking I got out my matches and struck one. There lay the boy, a lad of about ten, on the ground, with his leg doubled up under him, as if it must be broken, and bending over him the girl. The flame of the match didn't give me much chance of seeing the colour of her eyes, or the set of her features; but the little I could make out made me uncommon wishful to see more of her. It was a dark, pale face, with a proud, wilful look in it, which puzzled and pleased me all at once; and she wasn't from Bewley village, that I saw at a glance, only as I couldn't make quite so bold as to ask her straight out about herself, I began about the boy.

"What's happened to him?" I asked, "and how did he get into this mess?"

"He got a kick from one of them wild ponies," she said, sharply; "but it doesn't much matter how it happened—there he is, and if you are going to help don't stop to talk. Arty," she went on, speaking very sweet and tender, as she turned from me to the boy, "here's a man who was going by. Perhaps he can lift you up without hurting you."

"No, he canna," whined the lad, "he shan't touch me. Let me alone, Phoebe, send him away."

"Come, come," I began, "this won't do, my lad. If you lie here on the cold, damp ground you'll have more than broken bones. Now let us hoist you up on my back, and when you're there we'll make the best of the way to your mother and your bed."

I wondered in my mind whether perhaps he was one of the gipsy children, of which there are always plenty on the heath.

"Now, my lass," I went on, "suppose you help him up a bit, so that when I stoop down he can put his arms round my neck. You mustn't heed his screeching. It'd be

a great deal crueller to let him have his own way."

So between us, in spite of a good deal of opposition on his part, which not all her coaxing and kind words could pacify, we hoisted him up on to my shoulders, and I did my best to hold his leg, which I felt now was badly broken, so as to give him the least pain I could.

"And now," I said, "seeing that we're ready to start, will you please tell me which way you want me to go?"

"To the Bewley side of the heath," she answered, "to the third cottage from the white gate."

"And what are you going there for?" I asked, quite surprised.

"Because we live there," she answered.

"You ain't by any chance kin of George Lister," I went on, "that you live in his cottage?"

"Yes, we are," she answered, sharply, as much as to say she wasn't ashamed of belonging to him. "I'm his daughter, and this lad is his son. We were out to meet him on his way back from Winchester. Only Arty got running after a pony and it kicked him, and it's too late to—wait for father any longer."

"You'd have waited a long time for nothing I'm afraid," and I felt mortal sorry for her that I should have to tell her so, since she seemed so eager to see him, and so sure he'd come; "it'll be many a long day before George Lister's seen on Bewley Heath again."

She put out her hand and caught my arm. I could feel she trembled.

"You don't mean to say he's sentenced to prison!" she cried. "What cruelty and injustice there is in the world! And you're coming back from Winchester—then——"

"Phoebe Lister," I began, feeling rather awkward, "if that's your name, I'm main sorry for your trouble; but don't go to miscall them as have punished your father. There's a right and a wrong to every matter; and if a man's caught at two o'clock in the morning shooting birds in the close season he's pretty clearly in the wrong."

"That's the way you look at it," she cried, fiercely, "that's how you're paid to look at it. I know now who you are, though I didn't notice before, being so took up with Arty, and with wondering about father. Perhaps it's a good thing for the child I didn't guess, for I'd rather he'd a lain there alone, while I ran across

the heath for help than be beholden to you for a minute."

It wasn't too dark to see the anger in her pale face as she turned upon me; but she looked all the handsomer for it, and I said to myself that, being a woman, it was perhaps only to be expected she should have no reason in her; but aloud I said nothing, for I did not dare to try and comfort her as I would have liked to.

"And what was the sentence?" she asked, after awhile, in a hard, dry voice. "I suppose from what you say that he's got at least a twelvemonth."

"It's more than that," I answered; "he's got five years."

It was a very different matter to say this to his daughter, than to tell it to Ellis the head-keeper, or at the "Bewley Arms."

"Five years!" she cried, "he is to rot in gaol for five years, because he has killed half-a-dozen of the creatures that God made for the use of everybody."

"The birds belong to his lordship," I said, "it ain't me as made the law, nor yet the judge; and there's no good arguing with the law. But mind you, if he'd only meddled with the game he'd have got off cheaper; but he fought like a tiger——"

"And suppose he'd been half killed in the fray, instead of Mr. Ellis, would any of you have been put in prison? You set on him and he defended himself, and he's punished. Arty," she went on, "do you hear!—father's got five years, and it's Evan Barry, the new keeper, him as is at the bottom of it all, that's carrying you."

The boy granted something—he didn't seem to care.

"Phoebie Lister," I cried, "a man's bound to do his duty, whatever it is, and if my doing my duty has brought trouble on you, I'm sorry for it; but I can't say your father was in his rights."

"There's no need to say any more," she said, and she walked on in front of me, and I followed her, till at last just before we came to the Manorland she turned off the road, and led the way along the grassy track at the side of the heath, past a pile or two of brushwood and a couple of old sheds to a broken-down wicket in a furze-fence. She lifted the wicket on its hinges, and we went through, up a long garden path. The cottage stood at the end of the garden. There was no light, nothing, but the door stood open.

Phoebie went in first, and struck a light.

"Bring him in here, please," she said—and she spoke as if it was pain to her to speak to me—"and lay him down on the bed; and as you go past the 'Forest Arms' just ask if Jim Meers, the bone-setter, is anywhere about."

"There's no need to go after Jim Meers," I said; "I know as much about bones as he does. I've put many a dog's leg to rights; and a bone's a bone, no matter what's the animal. So, if you'll help me to some splints and some bandaging, and give me a hand, there'll be no need to waste time looking for Jim, who may be over at Brockenhurst or Lymington for all we know."

I looked into her face as I said this; but she turned her eyes away from me.

"I'd rather have had Jim Meers; but, as you say, he may be out of reach; and what should I do if Arty was crippled for life? Yes, you can see to him, if you will."

Then, without another word of thanks, she asked me what I wanted, and helped me to undress the boy—which was no easy matter, considering he screeched as if I wanted to kill him. It took a lot of time, and still more of patience, to get the bone in place; and when we'd finished I saw that Phoebie's eyes were red with crying, and her face as pale as a ghost's. She'd been so tender with him, that I longed to say something to comfort her, for it was easy to see she set store on kindly words; but there was that in her look that sent back what rose to my lips, and all I said was:

"There, we can do no more for him now; but I'll come to-morrow and see after him. And don'tee take on and fret; he'll soon be better."

"I ain't fretting," she said, drawing herself up. "I'm obliged to you for what you've done, and if there was anything in the house to offer you, I'd offer it. But beyond a loaf of bread and some butter-milk——"

"Nay," I cried, "I don't want anything. You're welcome to all I've done, and to all I can do; and if you'd shake hands with me before I go, I'd feel more than paid back."

But she only shook her head.

"Nay, Evan Barry," she said, "don't ask me to shake hands with you; I canna', I canna'."

"Very well, Phoebe Lister," I replied, trying to speak as if I didn't care; "then I bid you good night without."

As I said it, I walked out into the dark garden, down the narrow path, through the rickety gate, and out on to the heath. Then I turned to look back. I half expected that Phoebe would have followed me a few steps, that she would think better of what she had said; but there was no sign of her—nothing to be seen but the faint light shining from the little window.

After that, I went on my way home in a very different mood from that I started in from Winchester. The pleasure of having had the best of it was over. As I thought of Phoebe Lister's pale face and dark eyes, of her quivering lip and sweet voice, I felt that, big a pest as poachers are, I'd have put up with any amount of them, sooner than know she thought hard things of me. And she didn't look like a girl to change her mind. As I'd seen her, so I could fancy her abiding; and, indeed, as long as her father was in prison, how could she look kindly on me?

Then the thought of George Lister's words, as the policeman took him away, came back to me; and I remembered that the Bewley people were afraid of him, because they said he could cast an evil eye on those who had crossed him. I had always laughed at such talk as nonsense; but that night I felt almost as if something might come of the ill-luck he had promised me.

So, what with one thing and another, when I lit my pipe, and started for John Ellis's, I seemed to have quite a load on my mind which I couldn't get the better of.

Generally speaking, when I had anything to take me to the head-keeper's lodge of an evening—and I often found I had to go—I put my brikest foot foremost and whistled as I went. And if I got there before dusk, I mostly found Grace Ellis at the gate to wish me good evening, with such a pleasant smile, that I knew she had been on the look-out for me. And when we came into the house after a bit of talk outside, John Ellis would wink at me, and chaff us a little. Moreover, Mrs. Ellis would find an opportunity for telling me what a good daughter Grace was, and what a good wife she'd make for some one.

So somehow it had come to be said that Grace and I were courting, though as yet

I'd never said a word to her that I might not have said to any girl. I was ready enough to believe she'd make a good wife; but I wasn't in any hurry to marry, nor to begin courting in earnest, so I put up with all John Ellis's chaff, and I listened to Mrs. Ellis's talk, and I said to myself that there was no hurry about the matter.

Looking back now, I can see that if I'd really cared for the lass, I shouldn't have managed to put it to myself so coolly; but in those days I didn't know what caring for a woman meant; I didn't know what it was to have a woman's face and a woman's voice always dwelling in my mind, and one name always sounding in my heart. I didn't know what it was to spend all my days and a good part of my nights looking forward to a few minutes that would soon pass, or in counting up words and looks, and trying to find a new meaning for them every time I remembered them.

When all that came to me—and it began to come that September night—Grace Ellis had nothing whatsoever to do with it.

When I got to the lodge it was too dark for any one to be outside; besides, I hadn't whistled as I came. I had been too busy thinking. It was Grace, however, who opened the door when I knocked.

"Ah! Evan, is it you?" she said, as if she was glad to see me. "We'd almost given you up. I'd just said, perhaps the case hadn't come on, and you'd had to stay in Winchester. Have you only just come? We've saved some supper for you. Come in, it's a nasty raw evening for a long walk."

"Thank'ee, Grace. I've had my supper, and, perhaps, as it's so late, I'd better not disturb you. You can tell your father——"

"Nay, my lad," called out John Ellis, from within; "we can't have you keeping all your talk for Gracie. Come in and let us all hear the news. She'll have her share, I warrant her."

So I went in to the warm, comfortable room where Ellis and his wife sat one on each side of the hearth; and Grace came after me, shaking her head at her father and blushing. How different it all was to George Lister's dark, poor little cottage, where Phoebe was sitting alone with her troubles.

Then I had to tell my tale from beginning to end; that is, to the end of

the trial. Of George Lister's last words to me I said nothing, nor of what had happened on the way home.

"Dear, dear!" said Grace, when I'd finished, "he was a bad lot, I dare say, and he's got what he deserved; but don't it seem dreadful for a man, who's lived the free life George Lister has, to be shut up in prison!"

"It's almost as bad for them as belong to him," I said.

There was something in me that made me want to speak about Phoebe, however I brought it in.

"He ain't got much by way of belongings," said Ellia. "There's a great, good-for-nothing slip of a girl who ought to have been out at service this long time."

"I should like to see who'd take Lister's girl into their service," put in Mrs. Ellia. "She's as bad a one as there is on Bewley Heath, and that's saying a good deal."

"Nay, missus," said Ellia, "don't go for to take away more of her character than she's lost. She's a wild one, and she's dirtier and untidier than a woman should be; but there's nothing worse to be said again' her."

"Isn't there?" cried Mrs. Ellia. "And what about that business of young Meyrick? Was that the sort of way for a decent girl to go on?"

"Come, missus, I don't want to take the girl's part; but young Meyrick was more to blame than she was."

"Don't talk to me," cried Mrs. Ellia again. "The girls are always worse than the men in such things. I tell you, she's no good, and no good'll come of her. Indeed, it don't say very much for a girl that she'll look twice at Harry Meyrick, let alone encourage him. I know if he were to come after our Grace I'd soon send him to the right-about, though his father is one of the chief tenants, and rides his own horses. What do you say, Evan Barry?"

"I say nought, Mrs. Ellia," I answered, trying hard to look as if it was no business of mine. "I don't know enough about the matter to have a say."

"That's true," said John Ellia. "The talk was mostly over before Evan come to Bewley. Besides, why should he bother his head about such a young wanstrel as Meyrick's son, still less about Lister's daughter? Why, man, you arn't on the move! Fill another glass and light another pipe. We can't let you go yet, can we, Gracie?"

But I'd got up and reached my hat, and I wouldn't sit down again. I wanted to be alone, and to piece out what I had just learnt about Phoebe—which had come upon me like a blow in the dark—with what I remembered to have heard when I first came to Bewley in the summer.

Of the gossip that had been going about at that time I had taken but little notice, for, as Ellis said, what was Harry Meyrick and his wild ways to me, or, at least, what had I fancied they could have to do with me?

It was odd to think that I should be doing my best to recall all that I had heard folk say of him and of a half-gipsy girl on the heath, how he had told every one he was going to marry her, how his mother had cried and gone down on her knees to him; and how his father had threatened to turn him out of doors without a shilling. And either his father or his mother, or the two together, and, perhaps, a little of his own fickle nature, had got the better of him, so that he had been persuaded to go away to Stockbridge to manage for his father's brother, who was ill. Some people said the girl had followed him; some said otherwise; and by degrees the talk had died out, much to Mrs. Meyrick's joy, who gave out everywhere that now her son was going on very steady, and giving them all satisfaction.

All that I had known quite well—as every man, woman, and child in the place had known it—without caring one rap how it had begun or how it might end. And to think that all the time it had been Phoebe Lister—the girl I had seen and spoken to that night—who had been mixed up in it, blamed and ill-spoken of before me a score of times—just as Mrs. Ellia had spoken of her—only with the difference that all the other times I had paid no attention, while, this time, a dull, heavy anger had come over me to think that all this should have been, and that I had had no chance with her first!

She had cared for him. Well, I had not the heart to blame her for that. However bad a man is, there is generally a woman who finds him good enough to care for. As I got cooler, I told myself that it was all an old story, and that, moreover, it had most likely lost nothing in the telling; that Phoebe, who looked as proud and stand-off, was not the girl to act foolishly, if she was a bit wild, nor to let a man trifle with her; till, at last, what with one thing or another, I

managed — as people mostly can when their wishes pull them hard one way — to persuade myself that whatever had been between Harry Meyrick and Phoebe Lister was all over now, and that, when he had gone away and left her, she had put the thought of him away.

As to her character—little as I had seen of her—I was ready to stand up for it against all Bowley, or even all Hampshire, if need were.

MORNING IN THE BOROUGH MARKET.

It is just the dawn of day, the morning air is sweet and fresh, if somewhat keen, even in the heart of the City, where the rows of gas-lamps still shine brightly; a heavy dew has fallen in the night—at least we should call it dew in the country, but depreciators of London will perhaps say that it is only congealed fog. Anyhow, whether dew or congealment, it has made the side-walks a little slippery, and the sounds of footsteps—there are not many—are dulled, and the few vehicles that are about pass almost noiselessly by. Where, in a few hours' time, will surge the full tide of traffic, now stands an early breakfast stall, where the cans of tea and coffee steam away bravely over the glowing little furnace, and the light of the fire, and of the paraffin lamps, hung here and there about the little structure, give its interior a quite bright and festive appearance.

The air is fresher and keener as London Bridge is reached, and the daylight stronger. The bridge, too, is fairly alive, with a stream of men in workmen's dress setting in towards the City, and a sprinkling of carts, and early vans rumbling on in the same direction. And, peering over the parapet of the dry arch, behold Lower Thames Street, in a strange mingled light—a light that is partly derived from the glowing windows of the taverns, and the gleaming rows of lamps, while the house-tops and chimneys, and a solitary cat that watches the scene from on high, are more distinctly visible by the light of day. But there is the street all crammed with carts and horses, and a throng of people on the footways, while the white blouses of the fish porters are so many moving luminous points among the dark crowd, where everybody else seems stuck fast and motionless. The serried lines of carts

and vans stretching in all directions, and filling distant bye-streets, and choking up obscure City squares, throw a branch out this way too, and we have fish-carts up to the very head of the bridge, so that Billingsgate and the Borough Market over the river would soon join hands were not the bridge kept clear for traffic.

What sight is there that can compare with the view from the crest of London Bridge in the calm of early morning, when the hazy light is spreading like descending wings on the City, that is half sleeping, and half waking? Lights twinkle from the shipping, and gleam in the dark waters; but in the tideway a radiant streak of daylight makes a path among the clusters of masts and funnels, and throws a glow upon the murky piles of buildings, and upon the keep of the grim old Tower of London that peers above them. Just below, a steamer is taking in cargo for the Rhine, and a great gush of white steam, that curls upward from its 'scape pipe, catches the daylight too, and the signal is passed to the white trail of a railway train that is crossing the river higher up, while wafts of steam from docks and factories catch the morning rays, and give evidence that another day's work has begun.

Daylight has reached the foot of the bridge before us, and is pouring down into that strange under-world, where tall hoardings and dusky alleys surround the buttresses and pinnacles of the cathedral-like church of Saint Saviour's, whose comely tower rises white and stately from out of the din and hubbub of the market below.

Early as the hour may be, there is no question as to the Borough Market being fully awake. Streams of people passing to and fro, hoarse shouts and stentorian cries, the murmur of many voices from the glass-roofed beehive that forms the market-house, sights dimly seen, and sounds confusedly heard, from the higher level of the bridge, are evidence sufficient of the traffic that is going on down below. Descending the artificial mount that forms the approach to the bridge on the Southwark side, the evidence is more abundant that this is no affair of small potatoes, but a great mart and market which affords supplies to the great bulk of southern London. Light carts and heavy vans, tilted waggons and fragile shandrydans are drawn up two and three deep on each side of the street, and leave but a narrow passage between for

carts which are still arriving, and others that are driving off.

We can see where all this concourse begins; but it is difficult to find out where it ends. Up one street and down another, among courtyards and alleys and narrow passages, the trail may be pursued of these intricate lines of carts and horses. But when you may think that you have fairly reached the very last of the long array, behold the line begins again round the corner, and its actual finish is still to seek.

Upon this spot—that is, on the confines of the Borough Market at the foot of London Bridge, and under the shadow of the great church of Saint Saviour’s—are at this moment massed the commissariat waggons of South London, that vast and closely peopled district, the limits of which are ever widening and extending. It is easy to judge of the extent and importance of the area served by the market; for your greengrocer is a man who does not shun publicity, and he rather delights to advertise his name and residence in big letters on his big van, and inform us, who may look, that, as well as keeping a stock of all kinds of vegetables, and dealing in coal, he is ready to remove furniture carefully, and that a supply of spring vans for pleasure parties is constantly on hand. And it is safe to say that from Wandsworth in the west to Greenwich in the east, every district in South London has sent its train of greengrocers’ carts and vans to the Saturday morning market in the Borough.

Rambling about among the purlieus of the market, the impression is still retained of being in the undercroft of the world in general. The morning mist hangs about alleys and passages. Stoney Street is not yet fully illumined by daylight; there is a twilight gloom about Three Crowns Square; and Clink Street—which recalls the ancient “liberty” of the Clink—boasts a prison-like and vaulty atmosphere. Coming to the market building itself, there, amidst flaring gas-lamps and great arcades of vegetables, everything is in the full swing of movement and activity. The salesmen from their desks are shouting forth their wares and prices, and discussing things in general in a light and sportive vein with an audience of buyers around them. Customers are hurrying round from one stand to another; country growers, who sell and vaunt their own produce, are bawling lustily in people’s ears; porters, with great baskets on their

shoulders, rush the avenues, and sweep before them considering and unconsidered bystanders.

The noise and bustle is confounding; but, as a compensation, how delicious are the odours, which rouse all one’s memories of country things! Now it is a pungent whiff from bundles of freshly pulled turnips, that suggest autumn days and quiet fields. But turnips are in great demand at this moment.

“Turnips in yet, Joe?” bawls one with a beard, who is in the thick of the business.

“Yes,” replies another, briefly.

“That’s right,” says the bearded man.

And presently the gathering pile of turnips is swept away, and we lose the contrast of their white and green with the dull red of the carrots—stacked in great bundles close by. The sweeter perfume of the carrot is overpowered by the delightful savour of unnumbered bundles of celery; while the eye is feasted with the tawny orange, the delicate pinks and bright crimson of stacks of rhubarb. What rhubarb-pies will be baked to-morrow in Camberwell! And how Dulwich will rejoice in this harbinger of the coming spring! Nor are there wanting more exotic luxuries and more delicate perfumes. Hot-house grapes and new potatoes may be sought and found in the Borough Market; and though there is no regular flower-market, yet violets and white hyacinths—great baskets of them—fill the neighbouring air with fragrance; and women are making them up into little bouquets—not for button-holes for “mashers,” but for the widowed and bereaved, who will tenderly deposit them to-morrow on the graves of loved and lost ones.

Do not think, though, that there is much sentiment about the Borough Market. All is rough and ready there—rough of tongue and ready in repartee; the language of the place is often highly flavoured, and the market porters are not famed for amenity of manners, and they are said to be quarrelsome among themselves when the work is done, and the wages are being spent. Some of them in their leisure hours may join the bands of roughs who meet for combat and revelry about the Mint—the Southwark Mint, whose only coinage is now an occasional batch of bad shillings, although a mint was there in the time of Henry the Eighth; and the district owes some of its evil

reputation to the immunities it acquired as a Royal Palace, which in after times made it a refuge for all kinds of loose characters. The market itself, it may be added, is built upon Rochester Yard, formerly the courtyard of the mansion of the Bishop of that ilk; and Great and Little Park Street close by are the only reminders that Southwark Park stretched along here by the riverside, the shady groves of which belonged to the stately mansion of the lordly Bishops of Winchester, whose jurisdiction extended over the liberty of the Clink.

In the meantime there is no sign of cessation in the turmoil of traffic about the market. A wide, open yard, right under the east window of the church, is packed with country carts, all bespattered with country mud, and dexterously packed to a great height with country cabbages, which are being thrown out by men who reckon them in tens and hundreds, and rattled into great baskets, and carried off on the shoulders of porters to where the carts are waiting outside to carry them off, where cries resound for Chapman, Jones, Smith, or whatever the names may be of the consignees.

When the greengrocers are filled as to their vans, and sent away, the costermongers begin to arrive. Indeed, the one class melts insensibly into the other, although the difference is wide, perhaps, between the man who goes round with a cart, but has a shop likewise, and may be a ratepayer, or a juryman on occasion, and the man with a hired barrow, who has only a few shillings of stock money between himself and destitution.

But another class of buyers come to the Borough Market. What about nuts for the fairs, and for the little shooting-galleries that appeal to the propensities of small boys for both firearms and nuts? There are merchants of cocoa-nuts, too, and here are great cases of oranges, and piles of apples in barrels, all of which have no great distance to travel from the sale rooms of the fruit merchants about Fish Street Hill and the Monument, to the stores of the Borough Market.

An interesting point about this market is that it made itself without charter or anything of the kind. Originally a mere roadside market, such as often springs up along a populous thoroughfare, as in the Old Kent Road at this present date, and near the "Angel," Islington, or in the Hammer-smith Road — gatherings often

obnoxious to the authorities of the district, but which, being adapted to the humble, popular convenience, have a vitality which it is hard to repress. And in the same way the Borough Market, as it formerly existed, aligned upon the Borough High Street and circling about Saint George's Church, as if by hereditary transmission from old Southwark fair, was considered a nuisance by all who passed that way on other business bent, and in the end was provided by the City authorities with a locale of its own, the site which it now occupies. The market has increased and flourished, till it has outgrown its present quarters, and has become an important centre for its own particular trade.

But the great staple of the market, after all, is potatoes. That is a trade that goes on all day long and every day, and the offices and warehouses of potato salesmen and potato merchants cluster thickly about the courts and squares in the neighbourhood. Fortunes have been made in potatoes, and before now the humble stall-keeper has risen to a mansion in Clapham, with carriage and livery servants to match.

"Well, look at the potato market," says a salesman, who, from his little box is surrounded by tons of potatoes piled up in sacks and boxes, or rolling loose in their own appropriate pens, "and look at the population of London, four millions and a half we'll say, people who don't think they've had their dinner without a few potatoes. And put them down at half a pound a day a head—and that don't half supply my family—well, there goes nine hundred tons of potatoes a day at least for London and suburbs; and reckon them at eighty shillings a ton to be moderate, and there you have between three and four thousand pounds a day changing hands, and chiefly paid down on the nail, and mostly here or at Spittlefields."

Hereabouts potatoes and hops are a good deal intermixed, and the offices of the hop merchant and the potato dealer are found cheek by jowl. And hops and "taters" play the part of Box and Cox in the farce, and when one is off the other is on, and so they agree very well together on the whole.

Beyond the turbid bustle of the market are quiet, gloomy spots, where great warehouses shut out the light of day, and are linked together by flying bridges overhead. Here in a narrow nook, shut in

by lofty walls is a little dock, where one has a glimpse of the river beyond, and which is identified as bearing the name of Saint Mary Overy Dock. An ancient notice-board affixed to the wall affords this much information, and states as well that inhabitants of Saint Saviour's parish are entitled to land their goods at this dock free of all tolls and charges. The notice is signed by one who holds the solemn function of the "Warden of the Great Account." It is an ancient notice-board, and probably the Warden himself has gone to his "great account" long ere this. The dock, too, is an ancient one, for Saint Mary Overy has not been officially known since the dissolution of the priory, when its precincts and the adjoining parish of Saint Margaret's were formed into the united parish of Saint Saviour's, by which title the old church has ever since been known. This dock no doubt is the original priory dock, where ships from over the sea would come in, laden with wine for the cellarer to stow away in the jolly priory cellars. Now a hoy and two or three barges are lying here at rest, where no one would think of finding them, so tall and overpowering are the buildings that hem them in all round. One wonders whether, at some distant date, broad quays will stretch on either side of this forlorn nook, and steamers come alongside to discharge their cargoes, while a great market with fair white buildings and glittering roofs is thronged with a happy, well-dressed crowd, and distributing the products of every clime. Or is the truar omen, that of the gaunt deserted building with shutters hanging loose, and "to let" in great letters painted on its side?

A little further, and we come out upon Bankside, just about the oldest embankment on the river, which may have been in existence when London was a Roman colony; but that nobody has thought of extending or improving ever since. It is still flourishing in a rude and rusty way, with iron works, and bottle works, and electric-light works. And the blackened posts of some unused derrick enclose a picture, noble and yet familiar, the broad river, and the clustered buildings that rise from the water's edge, with Saint Paul's looming over all, and sky, and City, and river all bathed in soft and radiant light.

But with the thickly thronging associations of the Bankside we have nothing to do just now. Hie we back to the market, taking an opening called the Bear Garden,

the very same narrow, dirty lane that brought people up from the river to witness the bear-baiting in the olden times.

This brings us, with a turn or two, into a region where the stalwart red-capped drayman makes his appearance on the scene, and the big, ponderous horses and heavy drays of Barclay and Perkins come thundering along. And with the draymen, the market people, and the carts and horses are mingled, on this especial morning, the brass helmets and blue coats of the firemen, while great pipes that run beer on occasion, are covered by lines of hose that spout only water, while the perfume of malt and hops is mingled with that of burnt wood and baked brickwork; for, while the country waggons were rumbling to the market, a great flame shot up from Bankside, and not far from where the Globe Theatre was burnt lang syne, the brewery stables went up in fire, and two hundred gallant horses narrowly escaped, but happily did escape, destruction.

And now it is London Bridge again; but how changed the scene: omnibuses dash across, loaded inside and out with City men; smart young clerks in unbroken phalanx fill the causeway on either side; ships are shaking out their sails; boats are shooting to and fro on the river; and the great tide of life is stirring the City just as we market people are struggling sleepily homewards.

"THE SPIRIT OF IMITATION."

"As for the greater number of the stories with which the ana are stuffed—including all those humorous replies attributed to Charles the Fifth and Henry the Fourth to a hundred modern princes—you find them," says Voltaire, "in Athenæus and in our old authors."

This is true to a great extent; there are many good but worn-out jokes floating up and down the stream of time, which attach themselves to every individual of any pretensions seen coming down, and adhere more or less closely until another likely personage emerges into sight, when they transfer themselves, leaving only a trace of their presence behind them in the still-born volumes of ana which constantly appear and disappear, and, like parasites, obtaining a fresh lease of life by having new blood to feed upon. The reader will,

doubtless, be able to recall many instances of the thing of which we speak—jokes of all kinds, which have filtered through the ages from Diogenes or Dionysius the Tyrant, past mediæval times down to Sheridan and Rogers, and even—as we have ourselves seen in the funny columns of evening papers—to so late a day as that of Mr. Burnand.

There is another kind of good thing, of which similar specimens are attributed to men of different ages, but which, it seems to us, are due to coincidence of situation. The late M. Luand called it "the spirit of imitation," and illustrated his theory on the subject—a theory published after his death in the "Revue Française"—by an analogy taken from the history of invention. The honour of almost every important discovery, he reminds us, from printing to electric telegraphy, has been vehemently contested by rival claimants; and the reason is, not that some are necessarily charlatans, but that whenever the attention of the learned and scientific world has been long and earnestly fixed upon a subject, it is as if so many heaps of combustible materials had been accumulated, or so many trains laid, any two or three of which might be simultaneously exploded by a spark. "The results resemble each other, because each projector is influenced by the same law of progress; and as the human heart and mind retain their essential features, unaltered by time or space, there is nothing surprising in the fact of two or more persons similarly situated acting on similar impulses, or hitting on similar relations of ideas."

It is often difficult to know, in accepting this last explanation, whether the pearls of history are genuine, or only mock Brummagem articles; but that theory has one great recommendation in being constructive and not destructive: it adds to the accumulated stock of originality.

When Julius Cæsar fell, as he was landing on the African coast, he is reported to have said, to banish the fears of his soldiers, who accepted the occurrence as one of ill-omen: "Land of Africa, I take possession of thee!"

William the Conqueror, on landing in England, is also reported to have made a false step as his foot touched the sand, and to have fallen on his face. A murmur arose, and voices cried, "Heaven preserve us! a bad sign!" but William, rising, said, without confusion or hesitation: "What is

the matter? What are you wondering at? I have seized this ground with my hands, and, by the brightness of God, so far as it extends, it is mine, it is yours."

When Edward the Third, again, fell and made his nose bleed on the sea-shore at La Hague, a cry of consternation was raised, which he quieted with the remark: "This is a good token for me, for the land desireth to have me"; at which answer, says Froissart, "his men were quite joyful."

Pompey, according to the anecdote-mongers of antiquity, answered to some friendly representatives on the danger of a voyage he meditated to bring provisions to Rome in time of scarcity: "This voyage is necessary; my life is not."

Maréchal Saxe, setting out for the campaign of Fontenoy, made exactly the same reply to Voltaire, who had before that time used words similar in purport when his friends remonstrated with his determination to attend the rehearsal of "Irene;" and both he and the Maréchal were anticipated by Racine.

Voltaire was once speaking highly of Haller, and was told that his praise was very generous, since Haller said just the contrary of him. "Perhaps," said the philosopher, after a short pause, "we are both of us mistaken."

What is this but the exact sentiment that manifests itself in the letter of Libanius to Aristænetus:

"You are always speaking ill of me. I speak nothing but good of you. Do you not fear that people will believe neither of us?"

The lesson of perseverance in adversity taught by the spider to Robert Bruce is said to have been impressed by the same insect upon Tamerlane. Even Columbus and his egg were not original. The discoverer resorted to the device to silence those individuals who, before his memorable voyage, had maintained that America could not exist, and who afterwards maintained that it had been known a long time.

Brunelleschi, before Columbus's day, had the inevitable train of snarling hyenas to pick the bones of his merit in raising the cupola of the cathedral of Florence, and silenced them by the self-same illustration of the egg.

It is probable that the epigrammatic remark given to Queen Christina of Sweden on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis the Fourteenth—"He

has cut off his left arm with the right"—is apocryphal, since the identical thing appears in Valentinian. Apocryphal, too, in all likelihood, are the words said to have been uttered by a peasant to the "magnificent" Louis: "It is useless to enlarge your park at Versailles; you will always have neighbours," since Apuleius has it, and since also it has been placed in the mouth of a Norfolk labourer, in reference to the lordly domain of Halkham.

"The King of France does not revenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans." The coincidence between this and the remark of Adrian to a personal enemy on the day after his accession as Emperor, "Evasiati"—"you have escaped"—is purely due to similarity of situation, which in minds of a given calibre, induces similarity of thought. Another individual is credited with the remark. Philip, Count of Bresse, on becoming Duke of Savoy, said:

"It would be shameful in the Duke to revenge the injuries done to the Count"; and it may be—though we decline to say so definitely—that the one was suggested by the other. No such doubt, it seems to us, can find room in the following:

The right wing of Hyder Ali's army in an action against the English under Colonel Baillie, was commanded by his son, and intelligence arrived that it was beginning to give way. "Let Tippoo Saib do his best," replied the father, when asked for succour; "he has his reputation to make."

Historical students will remember in a moment that this was the answer of Edward the Third when exhorted to reinforce the Black Prince at Cressy.

The next is more curious still. When Commodore Billings and Mr. Main were on the river Kahima, they had for attendant a young man from Kanoga, an island between Kamschatka and North America. One day Mr. Main asked him: "What will the savages do to me if I fall into their power?"

"Sir," said the youth, "you will never fall into their power if I remain with you. I always carry a sharp knife, and if I see you pursued and unable to escape, I will plunge my knife into your heart; then the savages can do nothing to you."

This recalls the words of the French knight reported by Joinville: "Swear to me," said Queen Margaret, "that if the Saracens become masters of Damietta,

you will cut off my head before they can take me?"

"Willingly," returned the knight; "I had already thought of doing so if the contingency arrived."

Louis the Fourteenth said to Bolleau, on receiving his Epistle on the passage of the Rhine: "This is fine, and I should praise you more had you praised me less." The same compliment had been paid before his day by Queen Margaret—la Reine Margot—to Brantôme.

Frederick the Great is reported to have said, in reference to a troublesome assailant: "This man wants me to make a martyr of him, but he shall not have that satisfaction." Somewhat like, though not identical, was the remark of Vespasian to Demetrius, the cynic: "You do all you can to get me to put you to death; but I don't kill a dog for barking at me."

Another parallel, with which we conclude, may be found between the sayings of Lyeurgus and Dr. Johnson. Lyeurgus set about the reformation and alteration of the State of Sparta, and was advised by one individual to reduce everything to an absolute popular equality. But Lyeurgus astonished him by saying: "Sir, suppose you begin the reform in your own house!" Similarly Dr. Johnson, when Mrs. Macaulay advocated similar measures, silenced her by saying: "Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen—your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us."

THE ART TREASURES OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

SECOND PART.*

THE PICTURES OF THE LIVERY COMPANIES.

It was pointed out in a previous article that very little in the way of Art is to be found in the possession of the Corporation, and that little or nothing has been done by that body to increase the value or add to the interest of such things as it does possess. Yet it must not be supposed that there is a complete dearth of works of Art in

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Third Series, Vol. V., No. 110.

the City; though, for the purpose of finding anything wherewith to satisfy our eyes, it is necessary to examine the collections of the Livery Companies. Such an examination has, by the ready courtesy of all the Companies to whom application was made, been permitted to the writer of this article. With one exception only—that of the Armourers and Braziers—the request was readily acceded to, and all the treasures were opened to view by such Companies as possess them. For this courteous assistance our best thanks are due.

The result of the examination proves that, so far as pictures are concerned, whilst they are vastly superior to anything in the possession of the Corporation, yet they are not as numerous or as valuable as might be supposed. The plate, on the contrary, and in spite of the fact that much has been melted down in answer to Royal demands, is very valuable and interesting. This will, however, be referred to in a subsequent article, the pictures and certain other "objects of art" being described in this present one.

The great reputation of the Holbein, possessed by the Barbers' Company, leads the enquiry first in the direction of that Company's hall. This picture is painted on panel, and is the largest of all Holbein's paintings, being ten feet two inches long, by five feet eleven inches high, and was probably painted in 1541, towards the close of the artist's life. The picture was recently exhibited at the Exhibition of the Royal House of Tudor held in 1890 at the New Gallery. The subject is that of Henry the Eighth granting the Charter to the Barber Surgeons. The King is seated in the centre, looking out of the picture, holding the charter in his left hand; the other figures are nearly all kneeling. On the right are Dr. Chambers, Dr. Butts, and the Royal Apothecary, and on the left the Master and various members of the Company. This arrangement of the figures naturally gives an air of stiffness to the composition of the picture; but the heads are all magnificently painted, as are also all the accessories. The background is very rich in colour, and this richness is continued out to the front of the picture by means of a carpet on the ground. Unfortunately, the Court-room—now used as the hall—where the picture is hung, is so small and badly lighted, that it cannot be very well seen. Those, therefore, that saw this work in the Tudor Exhibition were exceptionally fortunate.

It is a great question whether it is safe to keep so valuable a picture in so circumscribed a space. The hall is situated in the middle of the Wood Street district, where fires are not unknown; and, moreover, the Court room is at the bottom of a light-shaft, with a lantern-light on the roof, and surrounded by walls thirty feet high on every side, so that if a fire once broke out there would not be much hope of saving the picture. It would be much safer if deposited in a public gallery.

Peyps tried, after the Great Fire, to buy this picture "by the help of Mr. Pierce for a little money. I did think," he adds, "to give £200 for it, it being said to be worth £1,000; but it is so spoiled that I have no mind to it, and is not a pleasant though a good picture."

It was engraved in 1735 by Baron, who was paid one hundred and fifty guineas for the plate and one hundred prints; but the engraving is not a very good one; the engraver did not even reverse the plate, so that the prints are reversed to the picture.

The Company also possesses a fine portrait by Vandyck, in very good condition, of Inigo Jones, who was architect to the Company. The Theatre of Anatomy, attached to the building—which Walpole calls "one of the best of Jones's works"—was pulled down at the end of the last century. The present entrance gateway in Monkwell Street is attributed to Inigo Jones; and there is some old work in the staircase and buildings; but, excepting the walls, hardly any of sufficient antiquity to be also attributed to the same architect. There is also a portrait by Reynolds of John Paterson, the Clerk, in 1776, very bright in colour, and not at all cracked. In Mr. Shoppee's pamphlet descriptive of the pictures and plate belonging to this Company, no mention is made of this picture; but only of an engraving from it. It has presumably come into possession of the Company since the publication of the pamphlet. The room is so dark, that the remainder of the pictures are very badly seen. There is a portrait of the Duchess of Richmond by Sir Peter Lely; another portrait by Kneller, with several others of the same date; also a portrait of Charles the Second, concerning which the following note appears in the account:

"Paid for a half-length picture of King Charles the Second, to hang up in the Parlour, and for a gold frame to the said Picture, £7 5s. 0d."

There are two portraits of the King and Queen of Bohemia, which were long known as the Spanish pictures; whether they are of any artistic value it is impossible to say, as they cannot be seen where they are at present hung. The opportunity might have been taken in 1889 to compare the portraits of the Queen of Bohemia, by Mytens and Honthorst, which were exhibited at the Stuart Exhibition. Such an examination would very possibly have given a clue to the authorship. There is also here a fine portrait of Edward Arnis, a master who contributed largely to the Company's plate, by Dobson, an English artist who rose to fame through the notice taken of him by Vandyck.

The pictures of the Painters' Company next claim attention, not so much for their value as for the fact that a great many of them were painted by English artists in what may be called the pre-Academical times, that is, before 1768. A pamphlet, entitled "Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Painter Stainers," published in 1880, gives some details of great interest. They existed as a fraternity in the reign of King Edward the Third, although their first charter was not granted to them till the sixth of Edward the Fourth.

They were called Paynter Stayners because a picture on canvas was formerly called a stained cloth, as one on panel was called a table, probably from the French "tableau." In 1575 they petitioned Queen Elizabeth that "she would consider their cause, and give aid and assistance to them, because they found that their trade began to decay, by reason of other persons that had not been apprentices to it, who undertook painting, whereby much alight work went off—as Pictures of the Queen and noblemen and others—which showed fair to sight. And the people bought the same, being much deceived; for that such pictures and works were not substantially wrought; A slander to the whole Company of Painters, and a great decay of Workmanship in the said science; and also a great discouragement to divers forward young men very desirous to travel for knowledge in the same."

This crafty appeal to the Virgin Queen, whose vanity on the subject of her portraits is a matter of history, was successful, as the charter granted to the Company in 1581 prohibited any person from using or exercising the art of the Paynter Stayner, unless he shall have been apprenticed for

seven years to some one of the same art or mystery, under a penalty of five pounds.

King James the Second also granted a charter, in the first year of his reign, confirming the previous charter of Elizabeth.

In 1673 an odd entry appears in the minute books to the effect "That the Painter of Joseph and Pottifer's Wife and the Fawre Elements be fined £3 6s. 8d., for such bad work." If only such a tribunal existed now, what riches might flow into their coffers from a like source!

On the seventeenth of May, 1635, "Mr. Inigo Jones, the King's Surveyor, was invited to dinner, and very lovingly came and dined with the Company." Amongst the distinguished artists who have been on the livery, are Sir Peter Lely and Sir James Thornhill. The pictures themselves were the gift of their various painters, who were members of the Court. The earliest of these is a picture of Saint Luke writing his gospel, by Van Somer, who was a native of Antwerp, but settled in this country, and died in 1621. There is a portrait of Camden the historian, presented to the Company in 1676. Most of the pictures are landscapes or marine pieces—one by Robert Aggas, died 1679, son of Ralph Aggas, whose maps of London at this period are regarded as authentic. Sailmaker was another early marine painter. Peter Monamy, a native of Jersey, and an imitator of the Vanderveelde School; Lambert, who died 1765, a follower of Gaspar Poussin, were all early landscape painters, and their works may be regarded with interest as being the predecessors of the Grand School of landscape painting, which was eventually developed in England.

The pictures themselves are somewhat black, and not in very good condition, and are, of course, not to be compared to the works of the various masters whose style these Englishmen followed; but they were painted at a time when English Art, as art, was so generally supposed to have been non-existent. There are several pictures of animals and fruit, of the type which is seen so much of a century later on the coach panels of the day. There is a picture of the Fire of London, which is supposed to be authentic, by Waggoner, of whom nothing is apparently known, except the fact that he painted this picture. There is a room upstairs, the panels of which were painted by members of the Company; of these paintings the pictures of dead game, by

Cradock, are good; they were painted about 1640.

In the Court-room are some engravings of interest; one from a design of Sir Godfrey Kneller, of a card of invitation to accompany the Society of Painters, at Saint Luke's Feast, kept on Thursday, ye twenty-fourth of November, 1687, at twelve of the clock in Paynter Stayners' Hall, when you shall be entertained by us.

Signed, ANTHONY VERRIO,
NICHOLAS SHEPHERD,
GODFREY KNELLER,
ED. POLEHAMPTON,

Stewards.

Perhaps the finest collection of pictures after that of the Barbers' Company, is in the possession of the Merchant Taylors' Company, who have a fine portrait of Henry the Eighth, by Paris Bordone. This portrait most probably represents that Monarch at the time of the Field of Cloth of Gold, for Bordone, a native of Treviso, and a pupil of Titian, was employed at the Court of Francis the First, and was specially commissioned to paint the portraits of the celebrities present on that occasion. The picture in question is small, but very rich in colour, and is certainly, after the Barbers' Holbein, the finest picture in the possession of the City Companies. It was exhibited at the Tudor Exhibition. The catalogue of that Exhibition refers to a similar portrait of Henry the Eighth at Hampton Court, the authorship of which is doubtful. This portrait of the Merchant Taylors' was, according to the same authority, painted about 1535, or fifteen years later than the date of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. This must be an error, as the portrait depicts Henry as a young man of about thirty, which was his age at his meeting with Francis the First; whereas he would have been forty-four if the later date were correct. Besides, there is no record that Bordone ever came to England. It was presented to the Company, with six other pictures, by John Vernon, Master in 1609, whose portrait hangs in the Court-room. Of the six others, only two exist, the remainder were very probably destroyed in the Fire of London. These two pictures are respectively a head of a man and a woman, of a rather poor character, painted by Otho Venius, who lived from 1558 to 1629.

There is, in the Court-room, a fine early portrait of Sir Thomas White, Lord Mayor in 1533, and founder of Saint John's College, Oxford. This picture, which is

excellently painted, was also exhibited at the Tudor Exhibition.

There are other early portraits in this room—of John Vernon, Master, 1609; Sir Thomas Row, 1562; Robert Dow, 1578; Walter Pell, 1649; Robert Gray, 1628; Sir Abraham Reynardson, 1640; but none of them are of the quality of Sir Thomas White's portrait. The portraits of Sir Patience Ward, 1671, Sir W. Pritchard, 1673, and Sir William Turner, 1685, are by Sir Godfrey Kneller, and are good examples of that master. As regards the two last named pictures, there is an entry in the Company's books:

"Item. Paid Mr. Kneller for the picture of King Charles the Second, and drawing Sir William Turner's and Sir William Pritchard's pictures and frames for them, £125.

"Item. Given Mr. Kneller's man, £1."

If a suggestion might be offered to the Company, it would be better to hang this fine collection of portraits lower down, on the top of the panelling, where they could be better seen. It might easily be done, and, if a frieze were added to the room, would not destroy the decorative effect. As they are now hung it is almost impossible to see some of them. In the music gallery at the end of the great hall, where the portrait of Henry the Eighth is to be found, there are several other portraits, including a large full-length of the Duke of Wellington, by Sir David Wilkie; the great General is standing by the side of his favourite charger in a fine pose. The painting of the head is good; but certain portions of the picture have cracked very badly, and turned black, presumably on account of the bitumen used by the artist; nor can the picture be considered a characteristic example of Wilkie's work on account of its large size. Possibly the artist, not being used to work on such a scale, used the bitumen to enable him to cover the ground more quickly.

Lord Chancellor Eldon, by H. W. Pickersgill, R.A.; and H.R.H. Frederick, Duke of York and Albany; by Sir Thomas Lawrence, are both uninteresting. William Pitt, by John Hoppner, is a very fine portrait. There are two very fine portraits of women by this artist in the Winter Exhibition of Burlington House, which works will undoubtedly bring Hoppner's reputation very much to the front.

On the stairs there are some portraits: Sir Claudius Hunter, by Sir W. Beechey;

Sir R. Baggalay, by Lant; George the Third and Queen Charlotte, by Allan Ramsay; Sir Reg. Hanson, by John Collier.

In the drawing-room there are Kneller's portraits of Charles the Second and James the Second; and two by Murray of William the Third and Mary. In another room are portraits of past clerks of the Company, of which the best is George North, by Hudson, who was Reynolds's master. In the same room is a portrait head of Charles the First, supposed to be by a pupil of Vandyck, which is a very fine thing. There is also a half-length portrait of Charles the Second, considerably better than the full-length by Kneller, already referred to. This picture has been in possession of the Company since 1693. Thus it will be seen that the Merchant Taylors' Company possesses a fine collection of portraits, those in the Court-room being especially interesting.

Besides the pictures there is a fine piece of tapestry hung on the staircase walls, and in the music gallery are two hearse-cloths, hung in glazed cases. There are seven of these hearse-cloths, or palls, in the possession of the Livery Companies: of these, the Merchant Taylors possess two, and the Fishmongers, Vintners, Ironmongers, Saddlers, and Brewers Companies each one. These palls were at one time used at the burial of prominent members of the livery; but the custom has fallen out of use, the last occasion on which one was used being at the funeral of a pensioner of the Ironmongers' Company, some twenty-five years ago. They are all beautiful specimens of silver embroidery and cloth-of-gold. Several of them are very much alike; but the one belonging to the Fishmongers' Company and one of the two belonging to the Merchant Taylors' Company, are much richer than the others. A description of this last one will indicate what they are like.

The centre is formed of a breadth of baldachin cloth, of what is known as cloth-of-gold and purple velvet pile; in length, six feet three and a half inches; in breadth, one foot eleven inches. The pattern is formed of three wreaths of conventional flowers very completely arranged in the space. To this centre purple velvet flaps are attached about ten inches deep, and on these flaps are sewn panels of gold and silver embroidery, representing on the sides the baptism in Jordan, and on the

ends the decapitation of Saint John the Baptist. To the flaps are also attached the Company's arms, and on each side is the inscription: "Ecce Agnus Dei," in large letters. The figures in the panels are dressed in the costumes of the period, which is about 1520-30. The other one is presumed to date between 1490 and 1572, and is illustrated in Shaw's "Decorative Arts of the Middle Ages," plate thirty-four. They were both exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries, in June, 1874. They are generally supposed to be of Flemish or German manufacture; but an account in the records of the Carpenters' Company shows that such things were manufactured in England.

With the exception of the Fishmongers' pall, the centre panels of the others are not nearly so elaborate as the one which has just been described.

The position of Fishmongers' Hall on the riverside by London Bridge, enables plenty of light to find its way into the interior of the building; consequently such pictures as are in the possession of this Company can be very well seen. There are some rather fine early topographical scenes, by Samuel Scott, who was one of Hogarth's boon companions; one of these pictures gives a view of old Fishmongers' Hall, which was replaced by the present Hall in 1831. There is also a good painting by James Holland, of Greenwich Hospital, and some very good pictures of fish by Van Duegnen, 1670; Van Haeken, 1767, and Snydera. These pictures, although perhaps of uninteresting subjects, are of very good quality in the style of Snydera. A large river scene is by J. T. Serres, a once well-known painter, and son of Dominic Serres, who was one of the original members of the Royal Academy, and an insipid follower of the school of Canaletti. Some interesting water-colour drawings by Yates, of Old and New London Bridges, complete the topographical drawings, of which this Company possess an interesting collection.

Of the portraits, there are two of William the Third, and Mary the Second, by Murray, replicas of those in the Merchant Taylors'. These inevitable portraits of Royalties seemed to have been turned out by the dozen, and are generally by artists of inferior merit; a visit to the Guelph Exhibition will show how dull and uninteresting are such portraits compared with those of other persons. This is chiefly owing to the fact that they

were seldom painted by any of the greater artists, but generally by the Court portrait painter, who did not always owe his position to his talent as an artist, and seldom or never achieved any lasting fame. In earlier times it was better, as witness the splendid collection of portraits of Henry the Eighth, by Holbein, and Charles the First and his Queen, by Vandyck.

There are two portraits by Romney, an artist whose work is seldom met with in the City. They are portraits of the Margrave and Margravine of Anspach; the latter is at present exhibited in the Exhibition of the Royal House of Guelph. It is a full length, life-size portrait; white satin dress, and cap with gold trimming. Like many of Romney's portraits, it is more conspicuous for graceful pose than anything else, and is not up to his usual mark, possibly for want of a good subject. The portrait of the Margrave is not as good as that of the Margravine. The portrait of Earl Saint Vincent, by Sir William Beechey, is excellent, with a very distinguished pose. Portraits by this artist are almost as numerous as those of Kneller amongst the pictures of the City Companies. One of Mr. Oales's best portraits—that of the Right Honourable Russell Gurney, Q.C., M.P., as Recorder of London—belongs to this Company, who also possess several inferior portraits.

The historical dagger of Walworth is kept in a glass-case in the hall. It was exhibited at Ironmongers' Hall in 1861; but a note in the illustrated catalogue, which was published as a memento of that exhibition, states that this is not the original dagger, but belongs to a later period. It is a very plain weapon with hardly any ornamentation.

A curious object of interest is a model of a frigate made by French naval prisoners. It is constructed entirely of small pieces of bone, which were cut from the mutton rations supplied to the prisoners, and is most carefully put together, evincing great skill and patience.

The pall, or hearse-cloth, has already been referred to as a very fine one. It is described in the Company's books as having been worked by nuns; the subject illustrated on the flaps is our Saviour giving the keys to Saint Peter.

In the magnificent suite of rooms to be found in the Hall of the Goldsmiths' Company, are a few good portraits,

although this Company has not so large a collection as those Companies already named. A fine portrait hangs in the Court-room of Sir Hugh Myddelton, who, in 1606, undertook to bring water to London, by means of the New River. This fine portrait is said to be by Cornelius Janssen. It was exhibited at the Tudor Exhibition in 1890, although Sir Hugh more properly belongs to the Stuart period. It is described in the catalogue of that exhibition as "a three-quarter length, life-size to right, black and buff doublet, black surcoat, white ruff and cuffs, jewelled collar with badge; left hand resting on shell placed on table; above, 'Fontes Fodinae;' on background, shield of arms and motto, 'Virtus Palma.' Canvas forty-six and a half by thirty-eight and a half. Engraved in Lodge." The name of the artist is not mentioned; but Janssen painted in England from 1618 to the time of the Civil War. A beautiful engraving by Vertue, of this portrait, hangs in the same room, where is also the original copper-plate, recently presented to the Company.

A portrait of Sir Martin Bowes, Lord Mayor in 1545, is also a very fine work. In Timbs' "Curiosities of London," it is attributed to Holbein; but hardly correctly, as that great artist died in 1543; besides, though a good portrait, it is not quite good enough for Holbein. It is attributed, in the Company's books, to Faithorne; but he was only an engraver. There are a few other portraits. Chas. Hozier, 1750; the inevitable portraits of George the Third and Queen Charlotte, by Murray; and the equally inevitable portrait of Queen Victoria, by Hayter—a replica of the one in the Guildhall. A portrait group of Masters of the Company, who have been Lord Mayors, by Hudson, is more interesting; and there is a good portrait of Lane, a former Clerk, by Beechey.

There is a fine marble mantelpiece in the Court-room, which has two terminal figure-supports by Roubilliac, the sculptor of the Shakespeare Monument in Westminster Abbey. An object of great antiquarian interest, also in this room, is a Roman altar, sculptured with figures of Apollo, and a dog and a lyre. It was found on the site of the Hall when excavating for foundations, and is supposed to have belonged to the Temple of Diana, which, report says, stood near this spot.

In the Court-room of the Vintners' Company are several pictures. One of these, the subject of which is Saint Martin

dividing his cloak with the beggar, is attributed to Rubens; but the room is so dimly lighted that it is impossible to tell if this attribution is correct. In Timbs's "Curiosities of London" it is attributed to Vandyck, which certainly is not correct. Strangely enough, the Company possesses a piece of tapestry with the same subject worked on it.

There are several portraits of Royalties—William the Third and Mary, and Charles the Second, which have a great family likeness to those already described as belonging to other Companies, looking rather as if they were turned out by the dozen. A portrait of John Wright, by Opie, is perhaps the best in the room. This Company possesses a hearse-cloth which is very similar to that in the possession of the Ironmongers' Company. This latter Company has a large collection of portraits, some of which look interesting; they are, however, hung in the banqueting-hall, the bottom of the frames being some twelve feet from the ground, and, consequently, can hardly be seen in daylight, and, much more certainly, could not be seen by gaslight. If pictures and portraits are worthy looking, they might just as well be hung where they can be seen, and would certainly, in the case of the Ironmongers' Hall, be preferable to the paneling, the enrichments of which are made of *Carton pierre*. A fine portrait of Admiral Viscount Hood, by Gainsborough, is amongst these pictures; and there are several other portraits of the seventeenth century, which might be interesting if they could be seen. Some portraits in the Court-room are by Henry Cooke, an artist who painted about the year 1640, and for these he was paid the magnificent sum of three pounds a-piece, including the frame. The Ironmongers' Company has some very interesting plate, which will be noticed in a subsequent article.

The Mercers' Company takes precedence of all the Liveries; although it is not of such antiquity as the Goldsmiths', 1327, or the Weavers', dating from 1164. Although one of the richest Companies, it has very little in the way of pictures.

In the Hall are portraits of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Thomas Gresham, Sir Richard Whittington, Count Pennington, and Dean Colet, the founder of Saint Paul's School. What these pictures are like it is impossible to tell, for the windows of the hall in which they are hung are filled with stained glass, and during the

daytime darkness almost reigns supreme.

The portrait of Whittington is described in Herbert's "History of the City Companies" as fanciful; but the portrait of Dean Colet might be very good, as there was a portrait of this divine, by Jan de Mabuse, exhibited in the Tudor Exhibition, so that is a chance of this one being by the same hand. An architectural piece, by Bonnington, hangs in a small room, and there are some portraits scattered about in the various rooms; but nothing of any very great interest.

The Carpenters' Company has some fragments of wall-paintings which were discovered in its old hall in 1845. The subjects were divided by columns painted in distemper; the groundwork is of laths, with a thick layer of brown earth and clay, held together with straw and a layer of lime, upon which the paintings are executed. There are only two fragments now hanging up in the Court-room, the subjects of which are (1) King Josiah ordering the repair of the Temple, and (2) Joseph at work in the carpenter's shop, the Saviour as a boy gathering the chips. The figures, though rather squat, are well drawn, outlined with an incised line, and retain traces of colour, which are, however, fast disappearing. The figures are dressed in the costume of the latter end of Henry the Eighth's reign, and the style of execution also suggests that the paintings were done about that time.

The Company also possesses two fine portraits—(1) William Portington, Master Carpenter, Master, 1637—very much in the style of the Goldsmiths' portrait of Sir Hugh Myddelton; (2) John Scott, Master in 1698.

In the historical account of the Carpenters' Company, by Jupp and Pocock, there are various extracts from the records, amongst which is an account, in the year 1513, for a hearse-cloth, the total cost of which was fourteen pounds twelve shillings and ninepence, each item being separate: so much for material, so much for making, showing that some at least of these hearse-cloths were of home manufacture. The date is nearly the same as those in the possession of the Merchant Taylors' Company.

In the Guelph Exhibition, at present being held at the New Gallery, are hung some portraits belonging to the Stationers' Company; two of them, by Kneller, of (1) Sir Richard Steele and (2) Matthew

Prior are very poor portraits. When Kneller painted a portrait of any one without a title, he did not consider it right to represent such a person in one of the flowing periwigs which adorned the heads of his kings and lords, but depicted the head of a poet, or a literary man, which is to-day of far more interest than the majority of those of kings and lords, wrapped in a dirty cloth, or cap, and looking very much as if the distinguished author had only just risen, and had not had time to perform his toilette. A better portrait of more recent date is by W. Lane, of Luke Hansard, the House of Commons printer, whose name is well known in connection with the publication of the debates. Another very good portrait is that of Samuel Richardson, the novelist, by J. Highmore. This Company possesses several other portraits, but of no great interest.

The Skinners' Company has a fine old portrait supposed to be of Sir Andrew

Judd, Lord Mayor, 1551. This picture, to judge from the costume, is quite a century later; but it is so fine that it would be worth while to find out all about it.

The Broderers' Company possesses a portrait of Old Parr, the English Methusalem, who was a member of this Company.

The Armourers' Company, according to Timbs, possesses a picture, by Northcote, of "The Entry of Richard the Second and Bolingbroke into London," purchased by the Company from Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery in 1825. This Company, however—for reasons best known to itself—prefers to keep whatever it possesses hidden from any intruder's gaze, so nothing very definite can be said about this work. But it is reported, by some of those who have been privileged to gaze upon this masterpiece, that it is more remarkable for its size than for any artistic merit with which the painter succeeded in investing it.

On the 28th of MARCH will be commenced a

NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY

MARY ANGELA DICKENS,

AUTHOR OF

"A MIST OF ERROR," "HER INHERITANCE," "A SOCIAL SUCCESS,"

"KITTY'S VICTIM," etc., etc.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I. THE THRESHOLD OF SORROW.

AFTER that evening, I began to regard the Laird with a speculative curiosity. He had shown himself to me in a novel light; and for the first time since our marriage I found myself studying the candid, honest face and kindly eyes, and wondering whether, after all, he did look upon me as something better than—well, not dog or horse—but farms, and shootings, and tenants' interests. The narrow limits of the yacht were favourable enough for my studies; and as Bella and Robert M'Kaye were a good deal together, the Laird was reduced to sharing my society, or that of Huel Penryth. The latter, however, had taken a gloomy and absorbed fit upon him of late, and was always reading, or writing, or making sketches of the wild scenes through which we passed.

The weather had changed to gloom and cold. The days were grey and dull, and the wind would moan drearily about the great rocks, and desolate hills, and the dark, roughened waters.

I longed indescribably to return. The nervous horror I had felt of these wild regions increased rather than diminished, and the tales and legends of the sailors, which the girls were always collecting and repeating, filled me with a superstitious dread, for which I could not account.

A brief glimpse of sunshine, and a paler

tint of grey in the leaden skies, induced us one morning to make the excursion to the Spa Cavern. To me it seemed that the fatigue and trouble requisite were ill repaid by the result. When we left it, the sea was rough and stormy again; the sun had disappeared sulkily behind great banks of clouds. We were all damp, and chilled, and tired. Even Bella's infallible good spirits flagged, and her face looked pinched and blue. The little pinnace scudded along through gathering mists, skirting the rocky coast and its numerous caverns. Here and there we could see the lofty peaks of the Cuchullins piercing the clouds, only to be hidden from sight the next moment by those thick, dense vapours. I cowered down in the small boat, shivering in every limb, despite the thick wraps with which the Laird had covered me.

"Surely," I said, as we neared the yacht, "we've had enough of these regions now; not even the scenery is worth this incessant cold, and damp, and gloom. I should fancy the sun had forgotten the very existence of these islands."

"I wonder what you would say to Stornoway and the Lewis?" said the Laird; "they are cold and stormy, if you like; this is nothing."

I shuddered; spirits and health were alike suffering, and the trivial discomforts, at which we had all made merry at first, had now become sources of misery and depression that I seemed too weak to endure.

"I agree with Athole," said Bella, as we reached the yacht at last, and were rejoicing over the prospect of luncheon, in the shape of hot soup and grilled salmon. "It is very dreary here; I expect the weather has changed for a long time. Had we not better get back to Oban?"

There was a little discussion; but the girls had sided with Bella, and, of course, Mr. M'Kaye did the same. It was agreed, therefore, that if the wind favoured us, we should set sail next morning for the more genial coasts we had left.

The decision gave me more content than I had experienced for a long time. I retreated to my cabin after luncheon, on the plea of fatigue, and did not go on deck again until late in the afternoon.

There was a dull, yellow glow in the west; the yacht was heaving and tossing on the roughened waters of the loch, and the sky looked very dark and threatening. One of the sailors was looking out over the wild waste of waters through a spy-glass. His face wore an anxious and perturbed expression.

"What are you looking at, Ferguson?" I asked, approaching him.

He started, and almost dropped the glass.

"It was the Laird, mem; and he'll be out yonder wi' only the lad Davie in that bit cockleshell, and there's a squall coming up west. I know weel it will just catch them round yon point. He was fair out o' his wits to venture."

"Do you mean to say the Laird has gone out to sea?" I asked, anxiously, for it looked too wild and stormy for a small boat, and every moment seemed gaining strength and fury.

"I mean just that. It was all for shooting some kind of bird the lassies wanted, and the Laird took his gun, and just had the boat down, and called wee Davie to him, and was off. I'm feared they'll no' make the yacht to-night."

"But what would they do?" I asked, in sudden alarm. "There's no place where they could land, is there?"

He shook his head.

"There's the caves," he said; "but I'm afraid it is out to sea they'll be carried. I canna make out the boat now—'deed, it was fairly rash o' the Laird."

"Give me the glass," I said, and I raised it to my eyes and searched the grey and foaming plain with anxious scrutiny.

The clouds had closed again over that momentary golden brightness, the west was grey and cold once more, and a dull purple line was spreading ominously along the misty horizon. There was no sign of the boat. The sea birds were wailing and screaming around the wild crags, where already the water was dashing and foaming under the lash of the rising wind.

I dropped the glass and looked anxiously at the seaman.

"You'd best just gang below stairs, mem," he said, abruptly. "The squall will be upon us in the blink o' an e'e, and we'll just ha'e to make all sure and taut on deck here wi'out loss o' time."

"But the boat," I cried, in real alarm. "What will become of it—it is such a little frail thing to stand such a storm!"

Even as I spoke, a hoarse, hissing sound broke over the monotonous stillness—there was a fierce blast—a rush of breaking waters, and the whole force and fury of the tempest came roaring over our heads, till, in the gathering darkness, land and sea were alike shut out from sight.

The yacht trembled and strained at its anchor, as the swell caught and rocked it from side to side. I clung desperately to the shrouds to steady myself, while the rain burst forth in one fierce torrent, deluging the deck and drenching me to the skin.

Some one hurried towards me—I felt a hand on my arm—a voice in my ear.

"You here, Mrs. Campbell? What madness! Let me take you down below." The voice and hand were those of Huel Penryth.

I clung to him—unnerved by sudden terror.

"The boat!" I gasped. "Oh, why did you let him go? It can never live in a storm like this."

"Oh, nonsense," he said, cheerfully, as he tried to warm my icy hands, and support me over the slippery deck. "It will be safe enough. Campbell is a first-rate seaman, and he would have seen the storm coming, and made for one of the islands—or caves."

But his voice sounded far away and indistinct. The black pall of the surrounding darkness seemed to close thickly and densely round me. My eyes closed—and it seemed as if the roar and spray of the sea had swept over my head, and that I was sinking into unfathomable depths.

How long that unconsciousness lasted I cannot tell. When I recovered it was to see Bella's anxious face bent over me—and to find myself in my own cabin. I felt strangely weak, and the chill and cold of the sea seemed still upon me. The fury of the storm still raged. I could hear the shrill whistle of the wind, the rattle of the shrouds, the hiss of the waves against the sides of the rocking vessel.

For a while I lay passively there, trying to collect my thoughts, wondering whether it was day or night. Then suddenly memory returned; I sprang up and seized Bella's arm.

"Has the boat come back?" I cried, impulsively.

"The boat," she said, soothingly. "No, not yet; but, of course, it is quite safe. Do not distress yourself, the Laird knows the coast so well. He would have been sure to have put in somewhere when he saw the storm coming on."

I sank back on the pillow.

"Not yet?" I echoed, and the presentiment of evil, which had once before oppressed me, came sweeping heavily over my senses again.

"It will never come back," I said, drearly, "never—never; I feel it."

"Nonsense, Athole!" exclaimed Bella. "Don't be getting that idea into your head; you mustn't expect it to return to-night! Probably they'll wait for daylight wherever they put in. Every one says so. The sailors know what a good seaman your husband is. There really is no need to be anxious."

But her words failed utterly to convince me. I listened dumbly, stupidly; but all the time my heart grew heavier beneath its load of fear, all the time reproach and remorse were busy within me.

He might even now be lying cold and still under that wild, fierce sea. And I had let him go to meet his death without a kind word or look, without an effort to win his confidence, or relieve the honest, faithful heart of its burden of suspicion. The thought of death appalled me! Death in the best years of a good and useful manhood—in the midst of that careless jaunt taken for the gratification of a fancy expressed by a pack of foolish girls, and this was the result.

It seemed horrible in its suddenness; and, strange to say, the horror seized me as something too absolutely certain for any argument to refute. Slowly, surely it settled upon my mind. Slowly, surely it haunted the weary, feverish hours of the long night. With the dawn I was in a high fever, brought on by cold, exposure, and the sudden shock and terror of those awful hours.

Long afterwards I heard the story of that dreadful time. I was in a raging fever. They were all frightened, and resolved to run the yacht to the nearest

harbour, where I might be taken ashore, and medical aid procured. The morning broke fine and bright, and the wind was in our favour. One, two, three hours they waited for the missing boat. It never returned; and with every hour the delirium increased, and the fever raged more wildly in my veins. They made for Tobermory again, and here I was put ashore, and the yacht returned to cruise about Loch Scavaig, in hopes of hearing something of the boat or its unfortunate occupants.

But the search and the waiting were futile. No sign, no word ever came. They could only suppose it had been swept out to sea and lost.

Enquiry was made at every point; but no boatman or fisherman had seen aught of it. Nor was there any trace of its wreck, though coast, and cavern, and islands were searched for many a long day.

But of all this I knew nothing. Day followed day, and week followed week. Bella and the two M'Kaye girls were the most careful and assiduous of nurses; but, for all that, it was long before the turning-point was reached, and I was pronounced out of danger. Then, sadly, and by slow and wearisome stages, we returned to Corriemoor. Huel Penryth and the M'Kayes went to Inverness, but Bella accompanied me.

I found Mrs. Campbell quite broken down and prostrate under the blow that had so suddenly fallen. Donald was her pride, and prop, and stay. All her life and interests had centered in him so long, that without him she seemed to lose strength of mind and body.

Inexpressibly dreary and mournful was the house, and every face seemed to carry something of the shadow of that recent loss. The fact of there being no direct heir was another misfortune, as now the estate would pass to some distant relative. Mrs. Campbell and I had, of course, an income for life; but Corriemoor itself was destined for strangers.

I heard all this in a dumb and passive way. Perhaps, if I had loved the place, it would have been different; but I never had felt any keen or romantic attachment for my married home—nothing of the feeling I entertained for Craig Bank. I made up my mind to return there, and live with Grannie. Mrs. Campbell was going to a widowed sister in Perth, so I felt that I could act with independence.

Three months after that ill-fated yacht-

ing expedition, I was once again in Inverness, receiving Grannie's loving welcome, and almost ready to cheat myself into the belief that those intervening years had been but a dark and troubled dream, and that I was still only Athole Lindsay.

Almost. But the effort was not easy and not successful; for it was surely no girl's face that looked back at me from the little mirror of the familiar room; and no girl's heart beat now in that aching breast of womanhood, which spoke of lessons learnt in pain, endured in silence, and whose fruits had yet to be gathered in.

CHAPTER II. ALWAYS ALONE.

"WHEN are you going to be married, Bella?" I asked one morning, as she and I were sitting in the little drawing-room at Craig Bank.

"Not till after Christmas," she said. "You see the M'Kayses have a good deal of sight-seeing to get through yet, and Robert does not want to go back in the height of the Australian summer."

"I wonder how long you will remain out there?" I said, with a sigh. "I shall miss you, terribly!"

"Do you know what I've been thinking!" she said, suddenly, as she let the work on which her busy fingers had been engaged fall idly on her lap. "I don't see why you shouldn't come out with us! There's nothing to keep you here, and your health is quite broken down. You are as white as a ghost and as thin as a lath. It makes my heart ache to see you. I was asking Dr. Macgregor about you, yesterday, and he told me that you ought not to spend a winter here—the thing to set you up would be a sea voyage."

I shivered.

"Oh, no," I cried. "If you only knew how I hate the very sight and sound of the sea."

"That is because you are so weak and unnerved," said Bella, soothingly. "I'm sure I don't wonder at it. But, dearie," she went on, putting her kind arm round me and drawing me close to her side, "you must try and get over this—this morbid feeling. I know what it is; you are almost reproaching yourself; you think——"

"I will tell you what I think," I said, passionately. "I think, Bella, that I was selfish, and blind, and inconsiderate; that I dealt pain to that good, kindly heart by a thousand words, and looks, and ways;

that he knew, though he kept silence, why I had always been so cold and indifferent; that he wanted me to be straightforward, and have confidence in him, and then he would have helped me. But I never understood that till too late; and then came that cruel death, and I can never tell him now, or beg him to forgive me. Oh, to think of it wrings my heart! The long, long, never-ending silence; and he was so good! He never reproached me, and I—I was always brooding and mourning over my own selfish sorrows. I never even thought he noticed, or—or cared. But he did, Bella. Perhaps, too, in his own quiet way he suffered to the full as much as I did."

"I am quite sure of that," she said.

I looked up hastily, dashing the tears of weakness and helplessness from my eyes.

"You knew?" I said. "Well, no doubt it was apparent enough to every one but myself."

"It was very unfortunate," she said, as she smoothed the thick, disordered hair from my brow, and tried to school its rebellion under my widow's cap. "If Douglas Hay had not been with us, I often think we should have got on better. The Laird never liked him; and I'm sure—I'm more than sure, he saw that he cared for you."

I was silent. I shared her conviction. I had been sure of it also from that night when Donald and I had been so near confidence—yet, not near enough to seize the opportunity.

"But of what use to fret now?" Bella resumed. "How often you have said that life is full of mistakes, and we make our own sufferings by our own follies!"

"That is true," I said, mournfully. "Bella, I am not very old yet; but it seems to me, when I look back, that I have lived a lifetime of misery and self-reproach. Perfect confidence is the keystone of married peace, without it there will always be coldness, estrangement, and mistrust. I married Donald Campbell with a secret in my heart; and only now, when it is too late, I seem to recognise that I might have trusted him to the full, and that he would have been wise enough to understand and not condemn, and loving enough to pardon."

"I am glad," said Bella, "you do him justice, at last. But, dear Athole, do not let this morbid regret spoil your future. You are so young still, you may have a

long and happy life before you; if—*if* Douglas loves you still—and I am more than sure he does—what is to prevent your marrying him now?"

The blood flew in a sudden flash of shame to my face. "Oh, hush," I cried, entreatingly. "How can I make you understand? I know Douglas loves me—I know he never ceased to care, even through those silent years that divided us. But if I went to him, if I listened now, it would always seem as if that dead man's voice sounded in my ears with endless reproach; as if his face looked back at me as—as I have seen it look in a hundred delirious fancies, when the waves tossed it up to the grey skies, as if in sport and derision. He thought of me when he was drowning in that wild sea, thought of me, called for me—I know it so well—and in all the years to come I feel as if I could never shut out that memory, or silence that voice."

"But, my dear, this is only a morbid fancy, as I have said before; born of weakness, and sorrow, and the long strain you have suffered on heart and nerve."

I shook my head.

"You don't understand me, Bella. Indeed, I often think I do not understand myself. There is a wide difference between our two natures, and undoubtedly yours is the happier. Sometimes I wonder what makes the difference between us. I suppose it is circumstances. Had I been in your place— But, there, what folly to talk like that! We are as we are. No one asks us if we desire to be born; no one seems to care whether our surroundings are suitable, or not, to our welfare. Helplessly and without choice we are flung into a groove of life, be it a dungeon, or a torture-chamber, or a palace of delight, and luxury, and love. What can we do? Nothing—nothing. Nothing; though we beat chained hands against our prison bars, or shriek out in agony of soul in the torture-chamber, or rebel discontentedly amidst the flowers, and scents, and luxuries of our palace chamber, we shall not alter them nor change them. For fate binds us by a thousand threads, frail to all seeming, but strong, when united, as iron bands are strong. You are saying to yourself now that I am free once more—free to dream my dream of love, free to look forward to the happiness which once seemed so near, and so beautiful. But I know better, Bella; I am not free, and what I fancied was happiness proved only

a myth. There is no reality in the dream of my youth, nor is it able to content me any longer. I want something deeper, and stronger, and more satisfying. My love for Douglas is not a girl's love that accepts without questioning. It is a woman's—deep, searching, far-reaching, passionately jealous, and exacting. It is a love he could not understand, and could not satisfy; and—and I could not bear to test it again and know I must endure another failure. So, though you may think me free, Bella, I, in my heart, know I am not, and I will not run the risk of another marriage."

Bella looked at me with puzzled eyes.

"I confess," she said, "I am a long way from understanding you. You were always a fantastical wee body; but what pleasure it can give you to deny yourself what you once craved—and all for the sake of 'ideas'—I cannot imagine. It is as if you lived life for the sake of dreams, and when you wake up imagine that they are more real than the realities."

"Perhaps they are," I said, "to me. Oh, Bella, life is a terrible thing when we think of it. Sometimes I have thought that I shall go mad with all the doubts, and fears, and terrors of it; and no one—nothing gives me rest! And I look out on it all sometimes and wonder why we endure, and why we bear, goaded, like dumb beasts, by a taskmaster we cannot see—we cannot ever reach. Oh, it is no use looking shocked! I must speak. If you only knew how I suffered in all that terrible time of fever! How, in those long, long hours, one thought after another would chase itself through my brain, and all the hateful cruelty and horror of life, and the hypocrisy, and folly, and sin that loads it, and are perpetually seeking and securing fresh victims, would live out for me their histories, past and present! I wonder I did not go mad—"

Sobs burst from me, tearing my breast with suffocating pain. Bella, scared and white, in vain endeavoured to quiet me. How could I explain; how could I make her or any one else understand through what a phase of feeling I had lived and struggled for many and many a weary month?

The hopelessness of it perhaps calmed me more than her soothing words—the words with which one pacifies a grieved and sorrowful child.

Alas! it is not one of the saddest and cruellest of life's many cruelties that our

deepest thoughts meet no answering comprehension, our deepest cry finds never an echo! We must suffer alone—always, always alone. Whatever we think, whatever we doubt, whatever we feel, our own nearest and dearest seem the last to understand us, the last to follow us down to those depths from whence we call for aid, or sympathy.

We are foolish, they say, or wicked, or morbid. Something—anything but what is right, and safe, and rational; and so we take our sorrows and our questionings into silence once again, and weep, and break our hearts, or not, according as our strength may be. But we are alone, always, always alone!

"And now," I said to Bella, after that long pause of silence, "you see why I cannot go to Anstralia. It would look—oh, you must see how strange it would look! Huel Penryth and—and he are going out in the same vessel as the M'Kaye. How could I go also? It is impossible. Even if it were really necessary, I could not do it; but I am sure it is not. I am well enough."

She looked at me more sadly as she resumed her work.

"You may be well," she said, "but you certainly don't look so. However, I know of old how determined you are when you have made up your mind. Perhaps," she added, with the nearest approach to sarcasm of which she was capable, "you have argued yourself into a belief that there is something meritorious in killing yourself by inches, as you certainly are doing."

"No, Bella," I said, with a faint smile; "I have no particular desire to do that."

"It's just sheer perversity," she added, crossly. "I shall set Kenneth on to argue with you; he always succeeds in making people do what he wishes."

"Kenneth!" I exclaimed. "Is he home? I thought he was in Edinburgh."

"We expect him to-night," she said. "I suppose you'll not be forbidding him to come and see you, my wee leddy!"

"No; I shall be very glad to see him again," I answered. "It is a long time since we met. He never would come to Corriemoor."

"Perhaps," said Bella, dryly, "he had reasons. Kenneth is very stiff in the matter of opinions, and once he makes up his mind it's no easy work to alter it. I'm not sorry Douglas Hay is away in Corn-

wall; they never agreed; and I'm more than sure that Kenneth would not have cared to see him hanging about here."

"I really do not see why it should matter to Kenneth," I said, with some indignation.

"Don't you?" said Bella, coolly. "That's because you keep your eyes very wilfully closed, little coz; but there's no need to say more; Kenneth can bide his time, and I've no doubt he will."

I was silent for a moment.

Her words distressed and displeased me beyond measure; but I knew she could not understand why they did so, any more than she could follow out the train of reasoning which to her seemed only morbid and gloomy.

For I had spoken but the simple, honest truth, when I had said I would not accept Douglas Hay's love were he again to proffer it. Yet I could not explain what had so altered and revolutionised my feelings. Only love seemed dead within me—dead with the kindly heart that I had never valued, and which for sake of whim of mine had found death in those wild Western seas.

How small, and poor, and insignificant a thing my own life looked beside that honest, unselfish, useful one of the Laird of Corriemoor! That whole trip had been planned and carried out for my pleasure; and now, what was the result? He had gone beyond the reach of my cry for forgiveness, my penitence, and remorse. Was it possible then that I should step to happiness over his dead body, that I should stretch out my hand to accept love and tenderness, and cheat myself into the belief that I was free to do so? I could not. Conscience, heart, mind, all seemed to rebel against such an action; and yet—the time was not so far removed when I had dreamed it possible—when I had acknowledged that love still lived and burned in my aching heart, and that I could suffer still.

But now? Well, now I only knew that ice itself could not have been more cold than were my thoughts of Douglas Hay. All the fevered longings, the passionate desires, the dreams of those dead days, had perished utterly; and that at the very time when one would have expected them to revive and live, nourished by fresh hopes, strengthened by new promises, a vision as glad and glorious as when my youth had gazed upon it through happy tears of trust and joy.

My youth—but that was far away—and

so was the love that it had believed in ; and I knew, so well, so well, that if I took back that love, and tried to content myself with it, and to cheat my mind into accepting it, I should only wake to the knowledge of another failure. I shuddered as I thought of the disenchantment and disillusion of marriage. I was no longer a girl, to whom dreams and ideals meant all, and I felt that I dared not risk a second venture, dared not trust the light nature, swayed by passionate impulse, wavering ever in the balance, the nature I had clothed in virtues of my own imagining, but now recognised as being utterly unable to give me what I desired.

If I had married him in the first instance I might never have awakened ; I might have been blindly satisfied to my life's end. After all, he loved me ; and what better thing can one desire than love in this hard and unpitiful world ? Yet now I knew that love alone would never satisfy me ; and I could not tell him why. It would only hurt his pride. It could not alter his nature.

If I said that I had set myself to analyse this madness for sake of which we had both suffered, and then gave him the result of such analysis, would that convince him ?

Could I say : " I love you ; but I know that if I married you I should be desperately unhappy ; that your love would not answer to my soul ; your nature could not come into touch with that higher part of mine which is ever seeking, asking, desiring——"

If I said that the knowledge of this feeling came to me suddenly without desire of mine, and took possession of my heart, and showed me that that heart had ceased to love him with the old, blind, adoring worship—what would he say ; how much would he understand ?

A man's passion is so stormy and impetuous a thing—while it lasts ; sweeping away obstacles and impediments, bent only on working its own will in its own way.

" Give me this day—this hour," it says. " Let the future take its chance ! " and for sake of that day and that hour one sees one's whole life wrecked.

I would have seized that day once, and with blind eyes and beating heart have taken its exceeding rapture as a divine gift, believing in a continuance that now I knew had no existence. Once—but that was surely long ago—a lifetime ago.

My eyes fell on my hands clasped

together, on that black mourning robe, which, after all, was less a mockery than I should once have deemed it !

It had the sombre hues my own life would wear, the dull and cheerless tint of all the colourless days to come. How thin and white my hands looked, resting there ; how loosely the gold circlet fitted my finger now.

The sight and touch of it recalled my wandering thoughts. A wave of sorrowful memories swept over my heart.

" I have spoilt one life," I said to myself, as I touched that small, gold symbol of so many regrets, such wasted hours, such bitter longings. " But I will never willingly spoil another. He will misjudge me. He will think perhaps I am acting out of vanity, folly, revenge ; but I must accept that. After all, will it matter so very much ? My life is not of so great a value—and it must learn patience, and endurance, even as it has learnt suffering.

THE ART TREASURES OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

THIRD PART.

THE PLATE OF THE LIVERY COMPANIES.

AT all times a considerable portion of the wealth of any of the guilds founded in the Middle Ages, has consisted in the possession of those vessels of gold and silver which are, in the present day, classed under the name of plate. Nor are the Livery Companies in any way deficient in this particular ; although, under the levies and imposts made from time to time by various monarchs, a very large amount has disappeared, either into the melting-pot, or by way of sale.

The inventories, which most of the Companies possess, give evidences of the enormous quantity of this plate, of which what is now in existence can only be a small part. Yet, even now, any one who has been permitted to see the collections of the different Companies, must be struck with the great value and interest of what remains.

Not only the twelve great Companies, but also many of the minor ones, possess their store of loving-cups, standing-salts, and salvers, of the value of which some idea may be formed when it is remembered that a silver standing-salt was recently sold at Christie's for the large sum of three hundred and fifty pounds.

It should first of all be stated that there is very little gold plate to be found anywhere; that which is generally described as gold is silver-gilt. The more precious metal is too heavy for use.

The only gold piece in the possession of the Livery Companies is an ink-stand, made in the early part of the present century, which belongs to the Goldsmiths.

It is popularly supposed that there is a service of gold in the possession of Her Majesty, but Cripps makes no mention of it in his "Gold and Silver Plate," whereas he specially describes three salvers of gold belonging to Her Majesty. It may therefore be assumed that this service is silver-gilt.

At an Exhibition of Plate held in the South Kensington Museum in 1862 there were only five specimens of gold plate exhibited. These included a pair of massive ice-pails, weighing three hundred and sixty-five ounces, given by Queen Anne to the Duke of Marlborough.

It will perhaps be more interesting in describing this plate to refer to it in historical sequence, as it will then be possible to notice the characteristics of each period, and to point out differences of artistic merit. For, of course, amongst much that is very beautiful, there is also a great deal in which all sense of fitness to purpose and proper treatment of material appear to have been forgotten.

The earliest known plate that was manufactured in England, was produced in the monastic houses; but of any that existed before the twelfth century, nothing but the record remains.

In the South Kensington Museum there is exhibited what is known as the Gloucester Candlestick, which was made about the year 1110, and, as a Latin inscription on it records, was given by the Abbot Peter to the Abbey Church at Gloucester. It is of a very elaborate character, and is at least three hundred years earlier than any known domestic plate, although there are pieces of ecclesiastical plate which are nearly as early. In fact, this latter kind preceded by many years the production of domestic plate, of which no mention is made till the Edwardian period.

Amongst the earliest articles in domestic use that are noticed in such records, are mazers. The name is of doubtful origin, but is generally supposed to be derived from the German word for the maple wood, of which the mazer was made. It consisted of a shallow bowl of wood, shaped

like a deep saucer, with a high rim of silver-gilt, and generally with a raised boss of the same material in the bottom of the bowl.

In 1253 a Bishop of Chichester bequeathed his great cup of mazer; and Edward the First, in 1296, had a mazer with cover, foot, and boss of silver. Reference to them is made as late as the time of Spenser, who, in his "Faerie Queen," speaks of "a might mazer bowl of wine." They were presumably used for occasional draughts, being balanced on the tips of the fingers, and then filled, and emptied at one draught. Thus they were the opposite of the other early form of cup, the hanap, which was a standing cup with a deep bowl on a high stem, and always covered, a custom which arose from the fear of poison being added to the drink whilst standing. It was part of the office of the sewer or taster to assay or make trial of all cups, to certify that they had not been tampered with.

There are only three mazers in the collections of the Livery Companies; two belonging to the Ironmongers, dating from about 1450; and one larger one, belonging to the Armourers, dating from 1579. Of the first two, one, which is more elaborate than the other, has a highly ornamented rim of silver gilt, with an inscription, in Gothic letters, "Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus Tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus; et benedictus fructus ventris tui." The arms of the Company are enamelled on a boss in the bottom of the cup. The second mazer is much like this one, but without any inscription.

Of fifteenth century plate, there is very little belonging to the Livery Companies, nor is much to be found anywhere; but there are two fine cups which date from quite the end of the century. One of these, the Leigh Cup, 1490, belonging to the Mercers' Company, is a very beautiful specimen of silver-gilt work, ornamented with a lattice of cables forming a series of panels filled with maidens' heads and flagons alternately. The foot is of open coronet-work, supported on three flagons; the cover, which is enamelled with the arms of the City and Mercers' Company, is surmounted by a figure of the maiden and the unicorn. Round the middle of the cover and of the cup on a field of the blue enamel, is inscribed:

To elect the Master of the Mercerie hither am I sent,
And by Sir Thomas Leigh for the same intent.

This cup was exhibited at the Tudor Exhibition in 1890; and a plated one is in the South Kensington Museum, where are also to be seen copies of many of the finest pieces of English antique plate, including the Ironmongers' mazer above mentioned.

The date of the second cup is not known with certainty; but it may safely, from its form, be attributed to the end of this century—that is, so far as can be judged from an engraving; for, as in the case of pictures, the Armourers' Company was the only one which would not allow its plate to be seen. This cup of theirs is known as the Richmond Cup; and though in outline and size much like the Mercers' Cup, it is very different in design; the body and cover are very boldly fluted, and a rich band of ornament runs round the cover. It agrees very much in style with the covered hour-glass salt-cellar which belongs to New College, Oxford, of which the date is 1493. Like the Leigh Cup, it bears an inscription on the cover: "✠ Pra : for : John : Richmund : Ientylman : cetian : and : armarar : of : London : and : Eme : and : Isabell : his : wyves : " this is repeated with variations on the bowl.

One of the most beautiful pieces of plate of the sixteenth century, or of any age, is the cup presented to the Goldsmiths' Company by Sir Martin Bowes, who was Lord Mayor in 1551. This cup, out of which Queen Elizabeth drank at her coronation, is about twelve inches high, of silver-gilt, and of much the same character as the Leigh Cup, but more elaborate in treatment—the stem, instead of being solid, is of open work, and encloses three crystals, which have a very beautiful effect. The bowl itself is not so large in diameter as that of the Leigh Cup, and is of more graceful proportion. It is quite as highly decorated. There is no mention of this cup in "Crippa's Corporation and College Plate," nor is there a copy of it at South Kensington; but it is undoubtedly the most beautiful cup to be seen in the City.

Amongst early pieces of plate are the standing salt-cellars which were placed on the table to mark the division of the members of the Court from the Livery. These articles are well known, on account of many references to them in historical literature. Like the hanap-cups, they generally had covers; but in some cases were only covered with a napkin, the top

having horns, or, as they were called, volute guards, to keep the napkin from touching the salt. A reference occurs in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," where Launce says, "The cover of the salt hides the salt"; and the "Boke of Kervinge," an amusing description of mediæval etiquette of the table published in 1516 by Wynkyn de Worde says: "Loke that your salte-seller lydde touch not the salte."

The earliest of these salt-cellars are of what is known as the hour-glass shape; there are two of silver parcel gilt in the possession of the Ironmongers' Company, and are dated 1518 and 1522. They are formed with six large flutes or lobes engraved with conventional ornament, and stand about three and a half inches high. They have no covers.

About the same period are the curious cups of which the bowl is formed of rather more than half a cocoa-nut, the stem being of twisted and ribbed silver, and being held to the bowl by bands of open strap and coronet work. The Vintners possess one in a very good state of preservation, dated 1818, and the Ironmongers and Saddlers have each one.

It is generally possible to tell the exact date of plate because of the Hall mark; this mark is stamped on the plate after the assay has been made by the Goldsmiths' Company, who have by charter, since the reign of Edward the Third, the power of making the assay—that is, the trial as to quality—of all plate produced in London. The hall-mark consists of a leopard's head—the crest of the Company—a lion passant, a letter representing the date, and the maker's mark. The date letter differs every year; only twenty letters of the alphabet are employed, consequently every twenty years the character of the letters, or the form of the device enclosing them, is altered. Certain alterations have occurred at various times in the other marks, a complete list of which will be found in "O.d Gold and Silver Plate," by W. J. Crippa.

This marking commenced in 1478, but of plate hall-marked prior to 1500 there are only some nine pieces known to be in existence. There were offices of assay in former times at York, Norwich, Chester, and Bristol, each of which places had a different mark. In the present day plate can be stamped at Sheffield, Birmingham, and many other places.

A very fine sixteenth century cup is the one presented by Henry the Eighth

to the Barber Surgeons, 1523. It is not very large, standing only some seven or eight inches high, and in shape is rather like a mazer on a stem. It is, like the majority of loving cups, of silver-gilt; the band is delicately engraved with leaf work, and Tudor badges, with four lions' heads, from each of which hangs a bell which tradition requires the person drinking to ring. This tradition is referred to in Pepys' Diary, twenty-seventh of February, 1663, as follows: "Among the observables at Chirurgeons' Hall, we drunk the King's health out of a gilt cup, given by King Henry the Eighth to the Company, with bells hanging at it, which every man is to ring by shaking after he hath drunk up the whole cup." The cover is beautifully chased, and is surmounted with a lion and a greyhound supporting the Royal Arms. This cup was exhibited at the Tudor Exhibition, and a copy of it is to be found in the South Kensington Museum. It has passed through many vicissitudes; it was once sold, but in 1649, Edward Arris, a master of the Company, bought it back and presented it to them. A cup somewhat similar in shape, and of the same period, though more elaborate in design, which is in the possession of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and known as the Founders' Cup, is esteemed one of the finest pieces of plate at South Kensington. The Bowes Cup, perhaps better known as Queen Elizabeth's Coronation Cup, already described as belonging to the Goldsmiths' Company, is possibly finer; it is, however, seldom or never exhibited outside the Hall of the Company, and consequently is not mentioned in contemporary works on plate.

A curious ornament, known as the Wine Tun and Wagon, belongs to the Mercers' Company. It is of silver-gilt, beautifully engraved and enamelled, and is generally supposed to be of German manufacture. The copy which is at South Kensington describes it as of English make. There is no date-mark, but it is ascribed to the first half of the sixteenth century. Its character and design are, however, decidedly German. It appears to be merely a table ornament.

In addition to the Richmond Cup, the Armourers and Braziers possess some fine plate of this; but it is impossible to tell, without examination, whether it is of the same value as that which has been described. In the illustrated catalogue of

works of Art exhibited in 1861 at Ironmongers' Hall, at which exhibition the Armourers exhibited their plate, there are references, some of which are illustrated, to most of the cups. The Richmond Cup has been already described. The large mazer, eleven and a half inches in diameter, dates from 1579. The wooden bowl may possibly be older, as mazers had almost gone out of fashion by this time. It is lined inside with silver, the rim of which lining is turned over. On the inside is an engraved figure of Saint George and the Dragon; on a scroll issuing from the mouth of the saint is inscribed, "Put on the whole armour of God." There are other inscriptions, of which one on the rim runs: "Everard Frere gave this mazer w. silver w. was garnished ano. 1579 for ye poor. Roger Tindel, Mr; R. Lokson, I. Pasfild, Wardens. Feare God and Honor the King." The Chapman Cup, dated 1580, is a parcel gilt cup, different in shape to any preceding cups, being rather of the vase or wine-cooler shape, and decidedly Elizabethan in ornamentation. The stem is partly open with scrolls. It stands fourteen inches high. The Company also possesses an owl-pot, 1537; the Bish Cup, 1582; the Doxie Cup, 1585; a cocoa-nut cup, 1598; and an egg-shaped cup, 1598, of which last there is a replica dated 1608. No other Company possesses such an array of sixteenth century cups.

In Timbs's "Curiosities of London," this Company is also said to possess six dozen Apostle spoons; but this must be a fiction, as there are only two complete sets of thirteen known to be in existence. The collection is possibly one of ordinary spoons, and, as such, would be of great interest, for spoons were almost the earliest household implements known. The Goldsmiths and the Barbers have some antique spoons.

Of the two sets of Apostle spoons referred to, one is in the possession of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Four of this set, dated 1566-67, were exhibited at the Tudor Exhibition. The other set, dated 1626, are all by one maker, and belong to the Goldsmiths' Company, to whom they were presented by Major Lambert. In the Ironmongers' Catalogue mentioned above there is reference to an exhibit of twelve Apostle spoons belonging to the Rev. Samuel Lysons, which is called a complete set.

These spoons came into fashion about

the commencement of the sixteenth century. It seems to have been an old custom for sponsors at christenings to give one or more such spoons—the wealthy giving a complete set, the less well-to-do giving according to their means—to the child for whom they answered. If only one was given, the spoon would bear the figure either of the Saint in honour of whom the child was called, or of the patron Saint of the donor. The thirteenth figure completing the set was that of the Saviour, the spoon bearing such a figure being the most rare. The custom was on the wane in the middle of the seventeenth century, after which period these spoons were no longer made.

Along with the Goldsmiths' set Major Lambert also presented the Company with a fine collection of old cups, chalices, and ordinary spoons, all of which have very wisely been placed in a glass-case for exhibition, instead of being exposed to continual use. The cups are mostly plain in design, such as would have been intended for ordinary domestic service.

Belonging to the sixteenth century is also the Goldsmiths' drum salt, ascribed to Cellini. It is of silver gilt, with a large amount of blue enamelling round the drum.

A fine old Delft jug, with Elizabethan silver mountings, dated 1562, belongs to the Vintners' Company. There are only two rose-water dishes of this century amongst the Livery plate. They belong to the Merchant Taylors; one, the Offley Salver, date 1590, is nearly plain, with a centre of chased ornaments, and is parcel gilt. The second one, dated 1597, known as the Maye Salver, is much more ornate, being chased and repoussé in high relief with sea monsters and foliage. This is also parcel gilt, which, it may be better to explain, means partly gilt, a method of colouring plate which is very effective.

Undoubtedly there was once in existence a large quantity of plate of this period; but much of it was melted down in obedience to Royal impositions, the better pieces being sold into foreign countries. Such as remains is very beautiful, a result not to be wondered at, when it is known that it was executed from the designs of such masters as Holbein.

Before leaving this period, mention must be made of the curious garlands with which the masters of certain Companies were crowned at their inauguration—a custom which is, in some cases, still kept up. These

garlands are formed of devices of silver, fastened on to a band or cap of velvet. The master's garland of the Carpenters' Company dates from 1561, and is made up of the master's initials, J. T.—for John Tryll—the arms, and the date. The other Companies possessing these garlands, which are all composed of like devices, are the Ironmongers, Leathersellers, and Barbers.

The Liveries possess a great deal of plate of the succeeding century; in fact the greater part of what may be called their antique plate belongs to this period, particularly to the latter part, after the Civil War.

The few cups that have been described as belonging to the last century, are of fine design, and beautiful specimens of the silversmith's craft; but this excellence is not always retained in the next period. There appears to have been an importation of German work about this time, for the splendid cup which Old Parr presented to the Broderers' Company, in 1606, is of Nuremberg manufacture. German silversmiths' work, much of which was very beautiful, was, at this period, very florid in design, with a tendency to naturalistic treatment in the ornament. This feeling seems to have influenced English workers, for the two cups belonging, one to the Broderers, known as the Harrison Cup, dated 1606, and the other the Leycroft Cup, 1608, belonging to the Armourers, are both very ugly in shape. The stem consists in each case of the trunk of a tree, and the bowl is a very ugly pear shape, with a sort of squeeze in the middle; the whole thing looking like a caricature of the German hanap-cups of the sixteenth century. In the Leycroft Cup, however, the chased and repoussé ornament is still very conventional. The Goldsmiths have a fine cup, with cover, of this period. It is known as the Hanbury Cup, 1609, and is the type on which the earlier cups of the Restoration are founded. The bowl and cover are covered with ornament in relief, the stem is baluster shape, and the cover and foot are rather flat in treatment.

The English tradition is well kept up by four beautiful cups belonging to the Carpenters' Company; these cups, which stand about fifteen inches high, are of silver-gilt, richly repoussé, and chased with conventional foliage and strap-work. In shape they differ from any of the preceding cups, the bowl is deep, and bell-shaped, the stem is of open work; the bowl being

supported by three scrolls, which are in the best example shaped in female figures. On each cover is a high, open-work finial of obelisk shape. The largest of them is inscribed:

"John Reeve being Mr ye second tyme made one for ye use of ye Mr Wardens & Coi-altye of ye mistery of Freemen of ye Carpentry of ye Cittye of London for ever w^{it}out charging ye Coi-altye then being, 1611." The other three, known as the Wardens' Cups, were presented by John Ansell 1611, Thomas Edmones 1612, and Anthony Jarman 1628, and bear inscriptions to that effect. The Master's Cup was taken as the model, but in each one a slight difference is made. This form of cup was taken as the model for the Jubilee Cup presented in 1887 to the Goldsmiths' Company by Major Lambert. The most remarkable thing about this cup is that wherever a plain surface appears it is engraved with a short description of some event of Her Majesty's reign, and some idea may be formed of the amount of engraving on the cup from the fact that a list of these events fills a closely printed scroll, about four yards long, which is enclosed inside the bowl of the cup.

It would be a hopeless task to attempt to describe all the cups belonging to the Goldsmiths' Company, whose collection of plate is so wonderful in extent and value, that an ordinary sightseer is simply dumbfounded. The Armourers' Company possesses six small wine cups, dated 1606, in shape much the same as the shallow champagne glasses of modern days.

The Camden Cup belonging to the Painter-stainers' Company, the gift, in 1623, of Camden the Historian, is one of the earliest of the graceful cups which become frequent towards the latter part of the century. The bowls are deep and square, the stem of baluster shape, and the foot plainly moulded; in later times the bowl is generally plain, but in this early example is decorated with deep repoussé acanthus leaves. A cup somewhat similar in shape, though not so large, belongs to the Haberdashers' Company; it is dated 1623, and the bowl is ornamented in relief with three scenes from the book of Tobit. Another beautiful cup belonging to this Company, dates from 1637. It has a bowl like the Camden Cup, and a stem of open work like those of the Carpenters' Cups. There are copies of the Haber-

dashers' Cups in the South Kensington Museum.

The Skinners' Company possesses some good cups of the period just prior to the Civil War. They are all of the same shape and pattern as these just described, but without the repoussé work; and all have baluster stems. The Powell Cup, 1637, has the stem ornamented with acanthus leaves; and on the pair of loving-cups—which were "the gifte of Edward Bolle, Esq., in 1642"—the balusters are very enlarged, so that the centre of the stem somewhat resembles the knop of an ornamental chalice.

The curious set known as the Cokayne loving-cups are assigned in the Company's account to the year 1610, although they were not presented to the Company till 1689. There are five of them, made in the shape of a cock, of which the head removes, and the body forms the cup. However interesting these cups may be as curios, and however well they may be executed, it cannot for a moment be pretended that they are beautiful works of Art. A cup should look like a cup, and not like a representation of a bird; there should be a sense of fitness in all things, a remark specially applicable to such articles as these. In the finest articles of plate it is this fitness for the purpose and the proper subservience of the decorative treatment which makes them valuable. The Peahen Cup of the same Company, dated 1642, is another curiosity, which, if it were only a silver statuette of a peahen and her chicks, would be a fine work of Art, but the utilisation of it as a loving-cup reduces it to an absurdity. The same remark applies to the Leopard Snuff-box. The Leopard is the crest of the Company; and the reproduction of it, as a small silver statuette, is very appropriate, so long as it is merely an ornament, but when it is found that the animal has a lid in its back, and is used to contain snuff, all artistic propriety is outraged. This snuff-box, however, dates from 1680, when the good taste, which was displayed before the Civil War, had become wrecked by the depravity of the Restoration. Possibly, also, it might be found that these Cokayne cups belong to the later period, as there seems to be some doubt as to their actual date.

With the beginning of the century another form of drinking-cup appears; the place of the mazer is taken by the beaker. The Mercers' Company possesses

three very good ones, dated 1604. They are of silver-gilt, perfectly plain, except for a moulded band and foot; tapering downwards in shape, and engraved with the Company's arms. Another beaker, of later date, 1638, belongs to the Vintners' Company. It is rather taller, and more tapering than those just referred to, of plain silver, and decorated with acanthus leaves springing from above the foot. This Company has also a cup of the same date, inscribed, "The gift of Anthony Palle to His Majestie's wine porters, 1638."

There are some drum salt-cellars belonging to this period. The Armourers possess one, 1604, with an inscription, "Make all sure"; and the Haberdashers another, 1615, known as the Hammersley Salt, the drum being decorated with a relief of a pastoral scene.

Another form of salt-cellar is known as the Pillar Salt, and of this kind the Goldsmiths possess a beautiful example. It is in the shape of a temple, with columns supporting the plateau for salt; in the centre, from the stem, is a small figure of Neptune, enclosed in crystal. An objection might possibly be taken to the design, it being a miniature representation of a temple, and, as such, showing a want of fitness for its purpose. It is not, however, a direct copy of any building, but a conventional treatment of architectural forms, the conventionality being more marked by the central pedestal of crystal.

The Vintners' Company have also a very fine one, as to the date of which authorities disagree. The ornamental work is Elizabethan in character, and points rather to the commencement of the century. This salt-cellar is a square one, with a cover, the whole standing twelve inches high and four and a half inches square; on the sides are four female figures, in high relief, representing Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, and Charity, and the cover is surmounted by another female figure, the whole being of most delicate execution.

The Clothworkers possess a very fine salver—"Ex dono, J. Barnett, 1605"—a marvellous piece of repoussé work. This and the Maye Salver, belonging to the Merchant Taylors, may be considered the finest in the City. There are copies of both in the South Kensington Museum. The majority of the salvers—or, rather, rose-water dishes—are very plain; of this kind the Skinners have a very good one, dated 1625.

Thus, of the plate which was made

before the Civil War, in 1642, enough has escaped destruction to show that it was very beautiful in character, particularly that which belongs to the Tudor period. With a few exceptions it never violates good taste, and is more remarkable for its artistic qualities than for mere vulgar weight of metal.

During the Civil War very little plate was made, and much more disappeared; but with the Restoration the manufacture was revived, and the collections of the Livery Companies were enriched by the addition of many beautiful pieces, which will be described in another article.

PHEBE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THE next day, as soon as I was free of work in the afternoon, I went to see how young Arty Lister's leg was getting on. As I walked up the hill towards the heath and then along the grass road from the heath gate to Lister's cottage, there was a kind of eager trembling all over me, such as I had never felt before. As to whistling—like I whistled going to see Grace Ellis—I could as soon have fled. I was wondering all the time if Phoebe would be in, and, if she was, if she would speak civiler to me than she had done the night before. Of the bad luck her father had promised me I tried not to think; but it was not so easy to drive his words out of my head after what had happened. By the time I had got to the tumble-down wicket my heart was beating faster than I'd ever known it beat, even when I'd been in the thick of the fray with poachers.

The cottage door stood open, and I thought I heard a footstep inside; but I knocked and waited, and knocked again. No answer came, so I pushed the door open and went in. The place was still and empty, except for the boy, who lay asleep on the bed where we had put him the night before. So I sat down and waited, partly for him to wake, but mostly in hopes that Phoebe would come in—she couldn't have gone far and left him like that.

As I waited I looked round. It was a poor place—even plainer by daylight than it had been the night before. The ceiling was low and the floor was bad; the walls and windows were dirty, and the fireplace was only an open hearth under an open chimney. There wasn't much

furniture, and what there was looked muddily and untidy.

Mrs. Ellis was right. Phœbe wasn't a handy lass about a house; yet she might take to tidy ways if she saw the need of them.

After awhile the lad opened his eyes and stretched up his arms.

"Phœbe," he called, "Phœbe, I want sommat to drink."

"Phœbe ain't about, my lad," I said; "but I'll get you something. I'm come to look at your bandages."

Then he began to whimper.

"Let me alone. I don't want you. I want Phœbe."

I was just going to tell him again that Phœbe was not there when, all of a sudden, she opened the door of the back place and came in.

"I've come to look at his leg," I began, feeling very shy when I saw her. "You didn't hear me come in, perhaps."

"Yes, I did," she said. "I saw you come through the gate."

"You might have come to say a word," I said.

"I had nothing I wanted to say," she answered, looking me straight in the face.

"Phœbe," I said, bringing my courage to the point, "what's come on your father isn't my fault. If I'd any ill-feeling against him, should I come here to help you? Let's be friends, Phœbe."

"The chicken doesn't make friends with the hawk, Evan Barry; and, as to me, I want no new friends."

She looked as proud and independent, as she said this, as if I was the dirt under her feet. Yet, when she took some water to the boy, her face was as tender and her voice as soft as could be. Ah! there's no accounting for the tricks a man's heart will play him. Instead of feeling angry that she snubbed me so, my only longing was for her to speak to me and look at me as she did at her little brother. Then I saw to his bandages, and when I had put them to rights, I lingered a bit, not because I thought I should gain anything by it, but because I couldn't make up my mind to go.

"You'll let me come again, Phœbe," I said at last.

"I'll have to let you come, it seems, whether I like it or not. Jim Meers is huffed. I seen him this morning, and he won't touch Arty's leg because he wasn't sent for last night."

"But you needn't ha' gone to him at all," I cried. "I told you I'd manage it."

"I know you did," she gave back; "but I'd sooner have had Jim."

Then she went and sat down by the bed and turned her face from me.

"Good afternoon, Phœbe," I said, after a few minutes' absence, and then I went out of the house.

"What a fool you are, Evan Barry," I said to myself, as I lifted the rickety wicket back to its place. "You're as big a fool as walks the earth."

When a man is much by himself he gets into the way of putting his thoughts into words; which I did just then.

"That's saying a good deal for yourself, Evan Barry," said some one close behind me; and when I turned sharp round I found myself face to face with old Peg Pennithorne.

It isn't easy to say who Peg Pennithorne was, nor where she came from. By times she lived in a yellow van drawn up opposite Lister's cottage on the heath, while her blind, white pony with his legs hobbled, made the most of what grazing he could find. Other times the pony was harnessed to the van, and Peg walked at his head along the forest roads to any fair or village feast that might be within five-and-twenty miles. She made a show of getting her living by plaiting baskets; but her chief stock-in-trade was fortune-telling. She'd more than once offered to read my hand; but I believed no more in her than I did in George Lister's evil eye, and I left both to them as did. She was a queer, old thing to look at, small and thin, with skin as brown and wrinkled as my old gaiters, and black eyes which pierced you as sharp as needles.

"Good day to you, Peg," I said, walking on.

"You're in a hurry, seemingly," she went on, "but if you are I can keep up with you till I've said what I want to. First of all, you're quite of my way of thinking."

"That shows your sense, mother," I answered, not knowing, however, what she was driving at.

"It may show mine; but it doesn't say much for yours. Now listen to a bit of good advice. There's a pretty girl, and a good girl, a girl I should be sorry to see unhappy, waiting for you not so very far off. You'd better be looking after her than spending your time as you've spent this last hour. Now don't tell me to mind my own business. Other people's business is mine. You'll get no good by hankering after Phœbe Lister."

"Who said I was hankering after her," I said, laughing; "and if I was, what is there against the girl?"

"I say nought against her; but I know more than I say. If you choose your luck well you'll go on with your courting at the keeper's lodge, and let Phoebe alone."

"Thankye, Peg," I said; "but I am not so sure there is any courting at the keeper's lodge to go on with or leave off."

"My lad," said Peg, shaking her head, "you called yourself a fool; if your eyes are wide enough open to see your own folly, why try to shut them when I show you wisdom? Now I'll bid you good afternoon, and you can think over what I've said."

And I did think it over; but there was something within me which was too strong to be changed by thinking, and those who have loved a girl at first sight, and all for herself, will know what I mean when I say so.

After that, every day as regular as possible, I went to look after young Arty, and little by little the child got to look for my coming, for I always brought him something in my pocket by way of lollipops, or a plaything, and I was as gentle with him as Phoebe herself, in hopes of winning my way with her. But she was always the same. What I brought the boy, she would fain not have let him take; but he was as wilful as she was, and wouldn't give up what he had rather keep. Now and then when I stayed on telling him this or that to pass the time away for him, she'd sit down and seem to listen too; but if I spoke to her she only gave me short answers, and sometimes she would say she had been thinking of other things so that she did not know what I had been talking of. Altogether I didn't make any way with her; and every day as I went out through the broken wicket I called myself a fool anew. But though I knew so well I was a fool, I clung to my folly, and as each new day came round I worked myself up to believe that if I kept on steady, and showed that I wasn't to be put off, she would come round at last. All this time I went but little to Ellis's, and when John persuaded me to go and smoke a pipe with him, I looked so gloomy and awkward that Mrs. Ellis would ask me what ailed me, and Grace's gentle eyes would have a sort of reproach in them, that stung me all the more, the more I tried to convince myself that I had done nothing to deserve it.

Arty Lister's leg took a longish while

to get right again; and much as I pitied the poor lad, remembering how I should have pined at his age, yet I couldn't help feeling a little sorry when I saw that soon I should have no excuse for going to see Phoebe. It was the beginning of November when I took the splints off for good.

"There, Arty," I said, "you won't want me much more; you can do without me altogether if you like."

"Shan't you never come any more, then?" he asked, looking rather doleful. Most likely he was thinking that toffy would be scarcer for the future.

"I'd rather come than not," I said, looking at Phoebe; "but if——"

Then I stopped. Why should I be the first to say she did not want me?

"There's no need for 'ifs,'" she said. "You'd better stick to your own sort. We ain't your sort."

"Phoebe," I cried, "don't say that! There need be no difference between us, if you didn't stick to making one."

"It doesn't matter whose making it is, Evan Barry, the difference is there."

"Phoebe," I began again, "don't be so hard with me. It isn't your nature. I'd do anything to please you; and you never so much as give me a kind word."

"Don't put yourself about to please me," she said; "those that please me needn't give themselves any trouble about it. Not that I'm so easy to please; but because——"

"I understand you, Phoebe," I broke in, with a sinking at my heart.

So I did understand her. Hadn't my love gone out to her without any asking or seeking on her part; and if she had been going to love me, could she have stuck to the grudge she had against me?

"And yet, Phoebe," I went on, "I hope we shall be good friends yet some day."

She said nothing.

"Phoebe," said the lad, "I like Evan, if you don't. He isn't a bad chap, though he is a keeper."

Before she answered—if she meant answering at all—the door opened sharply, and there stood old Peg Pennithorne. Phoebe's face lighted up at the sight of her.

"Well, Peggy," she said, eagerly.

But Peg's first words were not for her.

"Heyday, Evan Barry," she said, taking no notice of Phoebe; "so you haven't taken my advice? I thought you wouldn't. Well, gang your own gait, man, though,

mark you, it's not always pleasant to bear what we've brought on ourselves." Then, turning to Phœbe, she went on: "Yes, lass, I've done your errand; but whether you'll like the news I bring is another matter. It's no secret, so you may just as well hear it now. We all know, my lass, that a hot fire won't last long without plenty of fuel. Moreover, for some men one pretty face is as good as another: besides which, money-bags are better than rags and tatters. If you want to know any more, you only need wait till him you are thinking of comes home, which'll be soon, for a man can't bide in Stockbridge parish when his banns are going to be called at Bewley."

While she spoke, the colour had died out of Phœbe's face.

"Peggy!" she cried, in a pitiful tone; but Peg was half-way down the garden. Then she threw herself down on the floor, with her head against a chair.

She had forgotten all about me. For a minute or two I stood looking at her, without daring to say a word. I knew it was of Harry Meyrick that Peg had brought her word; that he had cast her off for some one else.

That was what she might have expected; and I longed to tell her that, if she'd give me a chance, I'd never love her less, let alone play her false. But it was no use speaking then; I should have to wait—how long, I couldn't guess; but I felt as if she must come to me at last, just because I loved her so much.

It was the first week in December when Harry Meyrick came back to Bewley. I was standing talking to Mr. Lamb, the miller, one afternoon, as he rode over the bridge from the village, looking as burly and well-pleased with himself as if he'd never done ought to be ashamed of.

"Hallo, Harry," called out Mr. Lamb; "what's this news that's come over from Stockbridge? When shall we drink the bride's health?" At which Meyrick grinned, and made a cut at him with his riding-whip. "They say," went on the miller, as we stood looking after him, "that he'll be asked in church next Sunday. Lord, who'd have thought last spring, when his father was in such a way about him and that gipsy lass, that he'd have steadied down so soon?"

"The gipsy lass, as you call her, is well rid of such a worthless chap," was my answer; and then I whistled my dog and

went my way, past Bewley Water, and up the hill on to the heath.

I hadn't spoken to Phœbe since the day Mother Pennithorne had told her about Meyrick's marriage; but most days I had found a good or a bad reason for walking along the heath in the hopes of seeing her. And though every day I had been disappointed, I hadn't lost heart; perhaps I had rather gained courage, seeing it was now more than four weeks since she had spoken a cold word to me.

"Surely," I said to myself, "when she sees that I am still of the same mind, and that Harry Meyrick has jilted her, she'll come round."

At the white gate I came across young Arty, playing tip-cat by himself.

"Hullo, Evan," he called out, "where are you off to?"

"I'm going to look at a hole or two in the fence," I said; "will you come along with me?"

"I cannot," he said, shaking his head; "I've got an errand for Phœbe."

"Well, then, you'd best be quick. It'll be dark long before you get to the village at that rate."

"I ain't going to the village, and I ain't in no hurry. The last time I went erranding for her, old Meyrick got a stick to me, and I had to run away."

"You ain't carrying a message from Phœbe to Harry Meyrick?" I said, catching hold of him.

"I didn't say what I was carrying," he said, slipping out of my hold; "'tain't worth while guessing. Phœbe told me not to tell."

With that he picked up his tip cat, and scurried down the lane.

So she hankered after him still. Well, then, she'll have no thought for me yet. It was almost too much to bear in patience, and yet I put it down to her credit. She had begun to love the man, and she couldn't leave off. Ah, if it had only been me, how sure I should have been of her!

With my thoughts working thus, I walked slowly along the heath, wondering when I should see her again, and how she'd treat me. The way I chose took me close past their gate, and that day, for the first time in all those weeks, there she was, standing against it, shading her eyes with her hand, and looking up towards the road.

My heart gave such a jump when I saw her, that I almost cried out; but all I said, as I pulled up in front of her, was:

"Good afternoon, Phœbe; it's a bitter cold day, ain't it?"

She started, as if I had come on her unawares.

"Have you, by chance, seen our Arty?" she asked, anxious like.

"Yes, I saw him five minutes ago, by the white gate."

"By the gate; then he'll be here directly."

"I don't know that," I said; "he wasn't coming this way when I saw him. You'd best not get in a fidget about him."

"Who said I was in a fidget?" she asked, sharply.

She looked at me as she spoke, and I saw that her eyes were red with crying. The sight of her pining like that was too much for me, after I'd seen Meyrick so gay and unconcerned. I'd never meant to tell her I cared for her more than she might have guessed, but now the words came out almost against my will.

"Phœbe," I began, going up close to her, and trying to take her hands, "Phœbe, my dear, you don't know how true and good I'd be to you if, I only had the chance. I've loved you ever since the first minute I saw you, and I shall never love any one else so much. I feel sometimes as if my heart would burst with the love I have for you, and with the thought that you are fretting for a man as doesn't care any more for you."

I'd better not have spoken at all; far better have said nothing than have finished with them last words.

"What do you mean?" she said, drawing away from me. "Who told you I was fretting? What do you know about them as care for me or them as don't?"

"I know one as cares for you," I began again—more fool I—"I know one man who'd go through fire and water to serve you. Oh, my dear, if you'd only let me, how happy I'd make you."

Then she looked me full in the face, and gave a little laugh.

"You've a fine conceit of yourself, Evan Barry," she said, "to think you could make me happy. Myself, I'm of another way of thinking; and, what's more, if I were to live a hundred years, I should never change my mind."

Then, without another word, she turned away and went up the garden into the house. As I saw her go, my head reeled as if I had been struck. So I had spoken at last, and she had answered; and I

knew she would stick to what she had said. Good Heaven! was I to go on living, day after day, till the weeks grew into years, and till the years made an old man of me, without ever hearing a tender word from the woman I would have died for? I couldn't believe it. All that day and the next I went about as if in a dream, thinking that, sure enough, something must happen to lighten the load on my heart. As I was going home to supper I met old Peggy.

"Good evening, Evan," she said; "you're just the man I want."

"Well," I said, stopping short, "what is it?"

"You look glum, my lad," she said. "Well, I don't wonder at it; but of that I'll say nought. I've come to tell you that you'd better not be down by the Old Wharf at eight o'clock to-night; and I hope you'll bear my warning in mind."

"And why not?" I asked, wondering whatever mystification old Peg was up to now.

"Why not?" she said, laughing, "because you aren't wanted. Gamekeepers are in the way sometimes."

"Is it poachers?" I asked. It was by the wharf we had caught George Lister.

"Never you mind," she answered, grinning again. "I'll tell no tales; only take note of this: you'd better not be at the Wharf at eight o'clock to-night."

Then she turned round and walked off.

Now, what was more natural, after hearing that, than for me to eat my supper as quick as possible and get down to the wharf by twenty minutes to eight? The way there was a rough cart-track through the copse by Bewley Water. His lordship had had the wharf made there for the convenience of bringing coals and other heavy things to the Manor House by water; but no one lived there, and in winter there was but little traffic coming up and down.

When I reached the opening in the wood where the landing was, I stood still; there was not a sound to be heard but the swish-swish of the rising tide against a couple of old boats that lay there. The black water lay before me, the black night all round me, and behind, the road looked like a black cavern running back between the trees.

"It's a hoax of old Peggy's, I don't doubt," I thought to myself; "but I'll wait a quarter of an hour."

With that I got under the shadow of a

pile of cord wood, and whistled my dog to come and lie down close by me. There I waited; but the minutes seemed almost like hours in the cold and darkness. I'd almost made up my mind to go away, when I heard the church clock strike eight, and at that moment a quick step came down the road.

Who was it? Was this a dodge of Peg Pennithorne's to put me on the track of some misdoing about the game? Or what could it be?

I gave my dog a sign to keep quiet, and then all was still again. Whoever it was that had come—and that I couldn't see, so dark it was—seemed to be waiting, just as I was, for some one who was in no hurry to come. It was very cold, and the waiting lasted so long that my feet and hands were numbed and stiff. At last, after half an hour, perhaps, I heard other footsteps in the distance, coming nearer and nearer, till they, too, stopped, and some one not more than a couple of yards from my hiding-place gave a low whistle. My dog started, but I hushed him again, in time to hear another signal given.

"Ah, you are there, then," said the one nearer to me, and I recognised the voice with a start for that of Harry Meyrick. "What a beastly dark night it is."

I knew whose voice would answer; yet, until I had heard it, I couldn't bring myself to believe that Phoebe had been standing there close to me all that while, waiting for the man who had played with her love and cast her off.

"Yes," she said, "I'm here; I've been here this long time. I thought you never were coming."

"I thought so myself," he answered; "it isn't a night to send a dog out."

Now I suppose what I ought to have done was to come out of my hiding-place and let them know I heard them; but I didn't do it, and the honest truth is that no such thought crossed my mind. I wanted to hear what he'd say for himself, and whether she really cared for him so greatly after all.

"Yes," she said, "it's a hard night. Why didn't you come to our cottage, where you could ha' sat by a bit of fire, instead of fixing on such a place as this?"

"Why did you bother me to meet you at all?" he answered, roughly. "I told you I wouldn't come to your house any more. It won't do now; but as you would see me at any price, I fixed on this place

as the quietest and furthest out of the way I could think of."

"You needn't be ashamed of folks seeing us," she said. "You said once you never would be."

"That's an old story, my girl," he interrupted; "I'm older and wiser since then, and the sooner you leave off bothering me the better for all of us. I've come to you this once; but, I warn you, all the messages you can send me won't stir me again."

"Very well, Harry," she said, and her voice sounded as if she were crying, "I won't bother you any more. Time was when I used to tell you not to bother me; but if you've forgotten all about it, I can forget, too—I can forget all the promises you made me, and all the kisses you gave me; but I shouldn't have thought that you could have cast off your word so easy, and have asked another woman to marry you, while you knew—"

"Come, come, Phoebe," he broke in, a little roughly, "that is all high falutin'. We talked a lot of nonsense a while back; but that's over, I tell you, and we can't begin again. A pretty girl like you can easily find a new sweetheart. They say Barry, the keeper, is always after you—" He paused; and I wondered what she'd say. But she said nothing; and he went on: "You've plenty of head on your shoulders, Phoebe, you ought to understand. And now I can't stay any longer; I'm busy just now; so give me a kiss for old times' sake, and I'll be off."

"Be off as fast as you like!" she answered, proudly; "but you'll get no more kisses from me."

"Just as you like," he said. "Good night."

She did not speak, but I fancied I could hear her breath coming quick, as if she was sobbing. He seemed to hesitate for a moment, then he said good night again, and I heard his steps along the road.

Only then did it cross my mind that if she knew how I'd been spying on her she'd have the right to hate me worse than before; yet as an honest man I felt I ought to tell her I had been there, and I had better tell her at once before she went away. It was a bad moment to go through—what with pity for her, and anger for him, and shame for myself, I hardly knew how to find words for what I had to say, and all the time she stood where he had left her sobbing aloud now that she thought she was alone. At last I made a move.

"Phoebe," I said, and my voice sounded hoarse and strange in my ears. She turned quickly round.

"Who's there?" she said. "Who called me?"

"I called you, Phoebe," I answered, coming forward. "I've been here this long time; I've heard all you said. I didn't know you were coming here. I didn't mean to spy on you, and what I've heard shall be as if I hadn't heard it, only I thought I'd let you know."

"It doesn't matter," she spoke in a dull, crushed voice, "I don't care who heard or who knows. Go away and leave me alone."

"Nay, Phoebe," I began; "won't you come along with me, and I'll see you home?"

"I'm not going home your way, and I'll go my own way alone."

I stood for a moment or two, then I began again:

"It's a bitter night, Phoebe; you'd better by far be thinking of moving. I can't bear to go and leave you here."

"Evan Barry," she said in a softer voice than she had ever used to me before, "you told me yesterday that you'd do anything to make me happy. Now if you spoke true, you'll go away and leave me to my own thoughts—they arn't pleasant, but I want to think them out alone."

"Very well, Phoebe, if doing as you ask me will show you the truth of my words, I'll go; but it goes to my heart to leave you here. Good night."

"Good night, Evan," she said, and it sounded almost friendly.

Then I turned and went slowly up the wood, listening if she followed; but when I reached the gate I had not heard her move. So I opened it wide and let it bang hard, as much as to say I was clear of the place; but instead of going further I stood there and waited to see her come by. It could do her no harm, I said to myself, for me to watch for her. And as I stood leaning against the gate, I thought over all that had passed since the evening when first I saw her. It was hard to believe that was only a few weeks back. Why, it seemed years since I used to go whistling up the wood to see Grace Ellis. Poor Grace, I hoped she hadn't cared much about me; but if she had it was past my power to mend matters. She was a better woman than Phoebe Lister, and there were twenty good reasons for liking her; but, nevertheless, it was Phoebe I loved and

not Grace. What would come of it all, I wondered over and over again.

Suddenly, the far-off striking of the church clock reminded me that I had been standing there a long while. I counted eight, nine, ten, and Phoebe had not come yet. I would go back and try to persuade her once again. It was sheer folly her staying there. I went cautiously, for I did not want to scare her. When I got back to the wharf I could see no one.

"Phoebe," I called gently, "Phoebe, I've come to fetch you home." There was no answer, however, and I could not be sure whether or no I saw her a little further on under the trees. "Phoebe," I called again, "is that you? speak if it is."

But it was not Phoebe; it was a pile of stakes against a tree. How could she have got away so quietly that I had heard nothing? I felt at my wits' end. Suddenly I was aware of Bob, my dog, snuffing about uneasily along the water-side. Then in he went.

"What is it, Bob?" I cried, and a fearful misgiving came over me. "Good dog; what is it?" Then I followed him to the water-side, and stooped down to see what he had got. That was where and how I found Phoebe. She must have lain down quietly in the shallow water beside the bank and let the rising tide carry away the life she was weary of.

There was a terrible talk in Bawley about her death, particularly when it came out at the inquest that Harry Meyrick had met her on the wharf an hour before she drowned herself. The Meyricks hushed the matter up as best they could; and Harry must have made the best of his tale to the brewer's daughter, for she married him, after all, in the Christmas week.

As for me, I had had enough of Bewley, and, as soon as I could, I turned my back on it. I heard afterwards that the Ellises spoke of me as a young scamp, who had behaved very badly to their Grace. Nevertheless, Grace married in course of time, and I hope she is happy; while, as for me, since the day I first saw Phoebe Lister I have never cared for any other woman.

I don't know how or when the story of his daughter's death reached George Lister, nor whether he grieved much over it. But of this I am sure—that if he could have known my share of the story, he would have felt that his words to me, as they took him away to prison, had been fulfilled to the very utmost.

"THE GLORIOUS VINTAGE OF CHAMPAGNE."

ACCORDING to the whimsical German legend, champagne was invented, or created, by "one hundred thousand devils," who, while Beelzebub was absent on particular business, went off on a frolic of their own. The sudden return of the chief threw them into alarm, and they fled into the cellar of a rich baron, where they found innumerable bottles of wine, into which they hurriedly entered. The master, in a rage, followed them, and, for punishment, corked them up in the bottles in which they had taken refuge. And this is why champagne sparkles with fiendish brilliancy.

According to sober history, however, champagne was discovered by a certain Dom Perignon, on whom, in the year 1688, was conferred the post of cellarer to the monks of Saint Benedict, who cultivated the vine-lands round the Abbey of Hautvillers, near Epernay, in the valley of the Marne. Dom Perignon was born with a discriminating palate and a genius for adaptation. He found the wine of the district to be of very varying quality, and he conceived the notion of "marrying" the vintages. He discovered not only that one kind of soil imparts fragrance and another body to the juice of the grapes grown on it, but also that white wine can be made from black grapes and will keep better than white wine made from white grapes.

It is not generally known that champagne is principally made from red grapes, to the extent perhaps of from three-fourths to four-fifths. If it was allowed to ferment with the skins the result would be red wine, except in the case of Sillery, Cremant, and Choilly, which are made from white grapes. That colour in champagne known as *cœl de perdrix*, and usually associated with good vintages, is the consequence of a large proportion of the grapes being full-ripe when gathered, when the fruit is lightly tinted with the colour of the skin. The famous vintage of 1874 had this characteristic.

Dom Perignon is further to be credited with the invention of corks, at least as applied to wines, for previous to his day, the bottles of Epernay wine were stopped with a plug of flax steeped in oil—a practice still followed in Italy. The white wine of Champagne became famous under the new

cellarer, who was ever meditating new devices in his well-stocked vaults; but it was well on to the close of the seventeenth century before he made his brilliant discovery. Louis the Fourteenth found new life in quaffing the creamy foam, and the supper-parties of the gay days of the Regency acquired fresh gaiety under its inspiriting influence. The Marquis de Sillery has immortalised one of these suppers at which he first introduced the wine grown on his paternal acres, and now bearing his name. He caused the bottles to be wreathed in flowers, and to be introduced to his guests on a given signal by a bevy of damsels attired as Bacchantes. Henceforward no supper-party was complete without the new sparkling beverage.

Yet men did not know why it foamed and why it sparkled. Because of the mystery there by-and-by came a reaction against champagne, whose peculiar character was alleged to be due to the use of noxious drugs. But Dom Perignon lived until 1716, calmly improving and elaborating his process, and although he died two hundred and seventy-five years ago, his works have followed him without intermission. Sancho Panza invoked blessings on the man who invented sleep, but there are hundreds of thousands of men and women who have cause to bless the name—if they only knew it—of him who invented champagne. And, doubtless, there are more who have had cause to curse it.

There seems to be a sort of periodicity of vintages. A good one occurs once in an average number of years, which average varies with the wine. Thus in port and sherry, and some other fine wines, there are shorter intervals between the good vintages than in champagne and hock.

There are two peculiarities about champagne-drinking which are capable of explanation. The one is the rapidity with which the wine exhilarates, notwithstanding the small proportion of alcohol it contains. This is due to the carbonic acid-gas evolved, which is inhaled while drinking, for it is the property of this gas to expedite the action of anything with which it is associated. It is estimated that one glass of champagne is equal in effect to two glasses of still wine of the same strength, and is more rapid in action. The other peculiarity is the sort of lethargy or deadness which follows after excessive champagne drinking. This is analogous to the stupor produced by

carbonic acid-gas; but it is assisted and intensified by the excess of sugar deranging the stomach. The undigested sugar turns into acid, and thus it is that too much champagne is apt to produce dyspepsia.

Herein we find both the blessing and the bane of this popular liquor.

Sweetness is often confused with richness in wines; but, as a matter of fact, sweetness is often produced by the addition of sugar, especially in champagnes. It has been compared to charity in that it covers a multitude of sins. The richness proceeding from natural saccharine is produced by a natural arrest of the process of fermentation, leaving an excess of saccharine in the liquor. It occurs mostly in the hot climates, but in port-making a richness is produced by the artificial arrest of fermentation. As a medicine, however, champagne is best "dry," and its tendency there is to thin the blood.

It is said that sugar-of-lead is sometimes added to low-class champagnes. Whether this be so or not the present writer is unable to say; but the reader can always avoid the risk by eschewing low-class wines. There is, however, a simple test by which he can ascertain the presence of the poisonous ingredient. Heat the wine with a little chlorate of potash and hydrochloric acid; then, when the chlorine and colouring matter have been driven off, put the remaining liquid into sulphurated hydrogen. If there is any sugar-of-lead present, it will be immediately precipitated to the bottom of the vessel in the form of sulphide.

The principal reason why champagne is only made in the districts of France now sacred to it, is because of the caves which admit of the indispensable uniformity and lowness of temperature. Such caves can be built anywhere, perhaps; but the expense would be prohibitive. In the champagne country the soil-surface is chalk to a considerable depth, which is easily and cheaply excavated. Thus any amount of cellarage can be obtained by digging. As a rule the cellars range in depth from thirty to forty feet.

The most interesting and comprehensive account of the champagne country and of champagne making is that given by Mr. Henry Vizetelly in his little book of "Facts About Champagne," to which we have to express much indebtedness in preparing this article.

After the death of Dom Perignon, the making of champagne grew sparse, as also

did its popularity, after a temporary reaction, increase with astonishing rapidity. But champagne-making is an industry requiring incessant labour, patient skill, minute precaution, and careful observation. Much depends on the selection of the natural wine to be treated, for, as Dom Perignon discovered, the soil lends its flavour to the grape. Thus the wine of the district of Ay has a flavour of peaches, that of Avenay one of strawberries, that of Hautvillers one of nuts, that of Pierry a peculiar taste known as the *pierre à fusil*, due to the abundance of flints, and so on. The grapes of special vineyards are always used to mark and characterise that of other vineyards, so as to preserve the various standards of the different brands.

The entire area of the champagne country is about thirty-five thousand acres, planted with about four hundred millions of vines, valued by the Taxation Department of the Ministry of Finance at nearly five millions sterling—four million nine hundred and sixty thousand pounds.

During the vintage season are to be witnessed some of those curious scenes which Mr. Vizetelly has described. The vintagers come from long distances every year, and are for the most part engaged before they leave their own villages. The others find accommodation somewhere in the neighbourhood of the vineyards, and at day-break they attend, on beat of drum, in the local market-place, where the rate is fixed for the day's labour. That rate, of course, varies from week to week and year to year; it may be as low as a franc and a half a day with food, or as high—as in 1889—as three or four francs. As a rule, they have no difficulty in finding employment; and the whole countryside is alive from the moment when the town-drummer begins his tattoo—about three o'clock in the morning.

For it is asserted that grapes gathered at sunrise produce the lightest and clearest wine, and also yield more juice than when plucked later in the day. Moreover, in the heat of the day it is very difficult, and often impossible, to prevent some fermentation which gives a colour to the must not desired in high-class wines. If the grapes have to be carried any distance in baskets under a hot sun, a large proportion of them become unfit for champagne-making.

At vintage-time, we are told by Mr. Vizetelly, from sunrise to sunset, everywhere is bustle and excitement. In these ordinarily quiet little villages there is a

perpetual pattering of sabots, and a rattling and bumping of wheels over the roughly-paved streets. The majority of the inhabitants are afoot; the feeble feminine half, basket on arm, thread their way with the juveniles through the rows of vines planted half-way up the mountain; while the sturdy masculine portion are mostly passing to and fro between the press-house and the wine-shops. Carts piled up with baskets, or crowded with peasants from a distance on their way to the vineyards, jostle the low railway-trucks, laden with brand-new casks, and the somewhat ricketty cabriolets of the agents of the big champagne houses, who are reduced to clinch their final bargain for a hundred or more pieces of wine beside the reeking wine-press. Dotting all the steep slopes, like a swarm of huge ants, are a crowd of men, women, and children; the men, in blue blouses, or stripped to their shirt-sleeves, being for the most part engaged in carrying the baskets of grapes to and fro, and loading the carts; whilst the women, in closely-fitting, neat white caps, or wearing old-fashioned unbleached sun-bonnets of the condemned coal-scuttle type, resembling the sun-bonnet of the Midland Counties, together with the children, are intent on stripping the vines of their fruit.

The vine-gathering has to be most carefully conducted and rigorously superintended, for no damaged or unripe fruit ought to find its way into the baskets. After these reach the "pressoir" they are again minutely examined by a set of men and women appointed for the purpose, whose duty is to detach all bruised or inferior berries, prune away the stalks, etc. The work of the sorters is most important, for a single rotten grape will infect and deteriorate the whole contents of the press.

This press is, for the most part, like the ordinary cider-press; but on some of the large vineyards it is worked by a large fly-wheel. On the floor of the press the grapes are spread in a compact mass, and are usually first trodden by a couple of men with their bare feet. Out of four thousand kilogrammes of grapes—the usual contents of a press—this physical pressure should produce about two hundred and twenty gallons of must; then the mechanical pressure is applied, and about an equal quantity should result, producing a total cuvée of about four hundred and forty gallons. This is allowed to flow into prepared reservoirs, and is thence pumped

through silver-lined or gutta-percha tubes into the vats, where it is allowed to clear for eight or ten hours. The mucous matter floats to the surface in a kind of froth, and when this appears, the liquor is quickly drawn off into new and perfectly clean casks. Meanwhile, the grapes in the press are subjected to further repeated pressures; but all the juice after the third squeeze is reserved as a beverage for the workers and for local consumption.

The cultivation of the grape in the champagne country is in the hands of the small vine-farmers—although a few of the large makers have also vineyards of their own. The small farmer does not, as a rule, crush his grapes, but sells them to certain middle-men who have presses, or else to the agents of the large champagne makers. The rule is for the small cultivator to sell his crop at an overhead rate per caque of sixty kilogrammes—one hundred and thirty-two pounds. Seven caques of grapes ought to yield a hogshead—forty-four gallons—of new wine, and the average price of the fruit is stated at about threepence-halfpenny per pound. In some years, as in 1889, it is higher; but it is often the case that when the crop is small the quality is superior. A "piece" of new wine usually runs about five hundred francs the hogshead of forty-four gallons. In 1889, however, the price ran up to a thousand francs, and for the specially-prized wine of Ay, as much as from one thousand three hundred to one thousand five hundred francs was paid by the large manufacturers. No wonder champagne is dear, when the raw material costs so much, before ever the maker begins his difficult and delicate task!

For the special characteristic of champagne is, as has been well said, that its manufacture only commences where that of other wines ordinarily ends. After the wine has been drawn off, as above described, it is left in the casks at the presses until the beginning of the following year. Then it is carted into Reims, Epernay, Ay, Pierry, Avize, etc., where are the establishments of the manufacturers and owners of "brands." There the casks are filled up and tightly bunged, and kept until ready for mixing according to the principle of the particular manufacturers, each of whom has his own method of producing the flavour and quality of his own brand. If the vintage has been an inferior one, a certain proportion of old superior wine—reserved for the purpose—is blended.

The mixing takes place in large vats, holding ten or twelve thousand gallons, and fitted with fans, which are worked to effect a complete amalgamation. The result of the mixture is what is called a *cuvée*, and in making it, it is usual to temper the wine expressed from black grapes by adding about a fifth part from white grapes. The mixing of the crude wines, so as to produce in the finished champagne the special flavour and bouquet desired, constitutes the art of the champagne-maker.

He has also to consider the effervescence, which depends on the quantity of carbonic acid-gas the wine contains, which, in turn, depends on the amount of natural saccharine. If there is too much gas it will burst the bottles, and waste the liquor; if there is too little, the wine will not sparkle. The right proportion is ascertained by means of a glucometer, which registers the amount of saccharine in the *cuvée*, and indicates to the watchful maker whether sugar-candy must be added, or fermentation prolonged to get rid of the superfluous saccharine.

When all this is done, the *cuvées* is drawn off into casks again, and is fined with isinglass, and slightly dosed with liquid tannin to make up for the loss of natural tannin during fermentation. At the end of a month the liquor ought to be perfectly clear and ready for bottling; if not, it has to be racked off the lees and refined.

Only new, perfectly sound, and very strong bottles are used, and these are all carefully tested by an experienced hand before being filled. Yet even with the greatest precautions, the loss by explosion in the cellars of the makers is enormous.

This is the method of bottling, or *tirage*: The wine, after a preliminary test as to its fitness for bottling, is emptied from the casks into vats or tuns of varying capacity, whence it flows through pipes into oblong reservoirs, each provided with a row of syphon-taps, on to which the bottles are slipped, and from which the wine ceases to flow directly the bottles become filled. Men or lads remove the full bottles, replacing them with empty ones, while other hands convey them to the corkers, whose gulletine-machines are incessantly in motion. Speed in the process is of much importance, as during a single day the wine may undergo a notable change. From the corkers, the bottles are passed on to the *agrafeurs*, who

secure the cork by means of an iron clip called an *agrafe*; and the bottles are afterwards conveyed to a spacious room above-ground, known as the *cellier*, or to a cool vault underground, according to the number of "atmospheres" the wine may indicate. This may be two, or four, or more, since air compressed to half its volume acquires twice its ordinary force; and if to a quarter of its volume, quadruple this force. A manometer, or pressure gauge, is used to ascertain the exact degree of pressure. A "grand mousseux" wine shows a pressure of five-and-three-quarter "atmospheres," and is at once conveyed to the subterranean vaults as certain to develop the proper sparkling. If the pressure only indicates four "atmospheres," or less, the wine must be kept in the *cellier* above-ground until it has developed further. Sometimes charcoal fires have to be lighted in the cellars to encourage the effervescence.

The bottles are now stacked in rows, and in about three weeks the explosion begins, as the gas-making proceeds. The bursting of bottles varies from two-and-a-half to about eight per cent.; but sometimes the wine surprises the maker. Not many years ago one large firm lost by explosion one hundred and twenty thousand out of two hundred thousand bottles in their cellars.

By the month of October, the breakage should be about over, and then the surviving bottles are restacked horizontally and left for about eighteen months or so. Some makers leave them for two or three years before going to the final process.

When this approaches, the bottles are altered to a slanting position, with the necks downwards; the position being altered from time to time until the slant becomes abrupt. This is to cause the sediment, which forms in the bottle after fermentation, to leave the side of the bottle for the neck. There, by a series of dexterous twists, it is gradually brought to near the cork, when the latter is smartly withdrawn, the sediment expelled, and a new cork inserted, with the loss of only a small percentage of liquor. Only a clever and a thoroughly practised hand can perform this feat, and can tell the exact amount of twist and slope to give daily to the bottles. Some men pass their lives in doing nothing else, and have been known to shake and replace in exact position as many as fifty thousand bottles a day.

The wine is now all in the chalky sub-

terranean cellars described at the outset, and there is completed the process of transforming it from "Vin brut" into the champagne of commerce and social fêtes. The operator who removes the sediment so dexterously passes on the bottle, with a temporary cork, to the doseur, who slips in the exact amount of liqueur, or syrup, prescribed for the particular brand or quality of the wine. Each manufacturer has his own recipe, and the syrups vary very much according to the quality of the wine and the market for which it is intended. In general, however, the "dose" of liqueur is very old wine of the very highest quality, to which has been added a little sugar-candy and a dash of cognac. The "dry" champagnes require a smaller "dose" than the sweet wines so popular in France and Russia; and for that reason, perhaps, the champagnes made for the English market are more wholesome than those prepared to meet the Continental taste.

The exact amount of "dose" varies according to the sweetness and dryness of the wine which is being prepared, and is measured and administered by means of a little machine which, in the best establishments, is made of silver and glass. From the doseur the bottle passes to the égaliseur, who equalises the contents, namely, fills up with pure wine to the requisite level for corking; and if colour is needed to suit some markets, it is attained at this point by making an addition of red wine. The égaliseur then hands the bottle to the corker, who compresses the cork with a machine, drives it home by a suspended weight, and passes on the bottle to the ficelleur, whose duty is to round the top of the cork, and secure it with strings and wire.

After all this is done, another workman whirls the bottles about his head, one in each hand, to complete the amalgamation of the wine and liqueur, and then they are allowed to rest for some months. When ready for shipment, they are labelled, capped, and wrapped in tissue-paper by women, and then packed in cases or baskets for transmission abroad.

And so we may leave the "Glorious Vintage of Champagne," to make the tour of the world, with its exhilarating effervescence and enticing sparkle.

Who does not know it, and who, save a Blue-Ribbonite, does not in his secret soul love it—let us hope—in moderation! "The grim Berliner and the gay Viennese," as Mr. Vizetelly remarks, "both acknowledge the exhilarating influence of the wine. Champagne sparkles in crystal goblets in the great capital of the North, and the Moslem wipes its creamy froth from his beard beneath the very shadow of Saint Sophia; for the Prophet has only forbidden the use of wine, and of a surety—Allah be praised! this strangely sparkling, delicious liquor, which gives to the believer a foretaste of the joys of Paradise, cannot be wine. At the diamond-fields of South Africa, and the diggings of Australia, the brawny miner who has hit upon a big bit of crystallised carbon, or a nugget of virgin ore, strolls to the 'saloon' and shouts for champagne. The mild Hindu imbibes it quietly, but approvingly, as he watches the evolutions of the Nautch girls, and his partiality for it has enriched the Anglo-Bengalee vocabulary and London slang with the word 'Simkin.' It is transported on camel-backs across the deserts of Central Asia; and in frail canoes up the mighty Amazon. The two-sworded Daimio calls for it in the tea-gardens of Yokohama; and the New Yorker, when not rinsing his stomach by libations of iced-water, imbibes it freely at Delmonico's. Wherever the civilised man of the nineteenth century has set foot—at the base of the Pyramids, at the summit of the Cordilleras, in the mangrove swamps of Ashantee, and the gulches of the Great Lone Land, in the wilds of the Amoor, and on the desert isles of the Pacific—he has left traces of his presence in the heap of the empty bottles that were once filled with the sparkling vintage of the Champagne."

On the 28th of MARCH will be commenced a

NEW SERIAL STORY,
BY
MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

AUTHOR OF

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dame Durdan," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Eheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

A NATURE—AND A NATURE.

I SUPPOSE it is habit that makes me still enter these daily records of my somewhat uneventful life.

Often and often have I resolved to close these pages and say no more; but in some hour of weakness or longing I have broken the resolve, and poured out the stream of restless thoughts to the safe and silent pages which have so long been my confidant.

A time of peace and quiet has come to me. In Grannie's home no one disturbs or intrudes. I am at once that object of interest, and sympathy, and speculation—"a young widow." But I am intensely thankful for the peace, and the rest, and the tender love of the sweetest, kindest soul that ever Heaven created.

How I envy her her simple faith, her perfect, untroubled trust, her serene content in all that has been or may be! The sands of life are running low; but she has no fear. Calmly, placidly as a child, she sits in the old, accustomed chair by the fire-side, each day finding it more difficult to come downstairs, each day shortening the time for that stay in the homely little parlour.

But with the chill breath of the failing year I notice a change. It is scarcely possible that Christmas will find her in

our midst, and she has gently and urgently tried to hasten Bella's marriage, which she wishes to take place here, like my own. The M'Kays are in Inverness again, and there really seems no reason to delay the event; so Bella finally consents, and the first of December is fixed for the wedding.

Huel Penryth and Douglas Hay are still in Cornwall; but Robert M'Kaye has expressed a wish for their presence, as his only guests. It is to be a very quiet wedding. Only the two families to be present, with the exception of Douglas and his friend.

And for the first time since that passionate parting by the loch-side, I am to meet Douglas Hay again. As I say this to myself, as I write it down in plain words, as a plain fact, I wonder how I can be so calm and so cold.

There is no thrill of pulse, no leap of heart at the thought of meeting him, and yet—once—how dearly I loved him! But I cannot recall that time. I cannot feel the old, passionate emotion.

I only sit here by the fire, gazing, a pale and sad reflection of myself, and saying in my heart, "I am so tired!" I seem to have grown hard and cold. Behind me are regrets, before me hopelessness. I am weary of life and all its vanity.

It is the night, before Bella's wedding, and she is staying here at Craig Bank at Grannie's request. The marriage will take place at midday to-morrow—that simple, unceremonious form which has seemed so strange to me.

Bella will have no wedding finery—a plain, grey silk dress, and a simple, grey straw bonnet, that is all. She will go away directly after the ceremony, and, after spending a week in Edinburgh, and

another in London, she and her husband are coming back to Inverness. Early in February they are all to set sail for Australia, and she has left the business of her outfit until her return here.

We have both been sitting by the fire discussing these matters; on the bed beyond lie the gown and bonnet, as they arrived from the dressmakers, and beside them 'the long, rich, seal-skin coat which the bridegroom has presented to her for travelling.

I thought she looked very grave and anxious as I watched her. But I was sure she was happy, with that contented quiet which is all-sufficient to her nature.

"He is a good man, and he will be very good to me," she had said, as she knelt there in the firelight, her long, dark hair falling over her shoulders, and taking rich reflection from the flames. "And I am so fond of the girls. After having a house full of brothers and sisters, I should miss them terribly. I like young folk about me."

"How I shall miss you," I said, suddenly; "it won't be the same place at all without you, Bella. I never had a sister, as you know, and you seem to have stood in the place of one ever since I came here."

"Do you remember that time?" she asked, somewhat wistfully. "What a white, frail little creature you were! Not that you look very much better now," she added, glancing up at my face. "Oh, my dear, I wish—I wish you would listen to reason, and come out to me to the Colonies; Dr. Macgregor is always urging it. Of course, now he won't say much, because of Grannie; but, dearie, we all know that the end is not so very far off for her; and then what will you do? You can't live on here by yourself, and you wouldn't care to bide with Mrs. Campbell—you never got on well with her. It will be very dreary and lonely for you. Your own folk seem not to want you, either."

"I often think," I said, "that I am not the sort of person any one wants. Why should they? I am not bright, or cheerful, or accomplished, or pretty. We were talking of grooves the other day, Bella, but I seem to fit very badly into mine. It is people like yourself that make the world brighter and better, not dreamers, such as I am."

"But have you no plan, no wish for the future?"

I shook my head.

"No, I care for no one so much as for Grannie and you; and I am going to lose you both. After that——"

"But, Athole, this is more than foolish. You have just let yourself get into a weak, morbid state of health, and your mind is suffering for it. I must tell Dr. Macgregor to speak seriously to you; for myself I confess I cannot understand what has changed you so; you are quite different ever since we went on that yachting expedition. Sometimes I am sorry we ever did."

"So am I," I answered, readily; "and Donald told me he planned it for me and for my pleasure, because he thought I was so dull at Corriemoor. Poor fellow! what a return for his thoughtfulness and self-sacrifice he met with!"

"Do you know, Athole," said Bella, suddenly, "that you always say 'Donald' now—never the Laird? Yet, when he was alive you would never call him by his name. I often thought he didn't like it."

"I suppose one always amends one's mistakes too late," I said, dreadingly. "If I had only known sooner that he cared—that he thought of me and loved me as he did, I might have been a happier wife and a better one. But I thought he was disappointed with me, and I seemed in the wrong place altogether. Mrs. Campbell always told him I was useless, and idle, and foolish; and I suppose he agreed with her. So we drifted apart, and I never dreamt or suspected he cared what I did, or how I suffered, till—till that night on Loch Savaig, when he spoke to me. He seemed so sorry then that he had married me; and—— Well, it was all so hopeless. Oh, Bella!" I cried, in sudden terror; "if you only knew how his death haunts me. He—he might have gone out reckless and careless of the storm; and that, too, was to gratify a whim of mine. Do you think," I continued, earnestly, "that he ever guessed about Douglas Hay?"

"I am afraid so," said Bella, gravely.

I was silent for a time; my thoughts flew back again to that night on the yacht—to that sudden, pitiful murmur, "Poor lassie!" which had fallen from Donald's lips, conveying so much to me, revealing so much in him.

Bella broke the silence at last.

"Have you thought, Athole," she said,

"how you are going to meet Douglas Hay to-morrow!"

Instinctively I glanced at my heavy mourning-dress.

"He will surely know that silence is best," I said. "He has not written conventional sympathy; I have had no word or sign from him since we parted. I—I had almost hoped he would not come here to-morrow; but I suppose it would have looked strange."

"Robert is very fond of him," said Bella, twisting the rings round and round her plump, white finger. "I think I ought to tell you, Athole, that he would like him to marry Jessie; he has said so again and again to me."

"Why should he not?" I said, slowly. "She would make an excellent wife."

"Of course; Robert's idea is to retire from this sheep-farming, or whatever they call it," continued Bella, "and settle Douglas and Jessie there at his station."

"The plan is admirable," I said. "But what do the chief people concerned in it say to the arrangement?"

"Oh, he has not spoken of it yet to either of them. I advised him not. To tell you the truth, Athole, I always expected that he would marry you after a year or so. I cannot, for the life of me, understand what has changed you. You were so madly in love with him; and yet, now——"

"That one little word—and what a difference it makes," I said. "Bella, don't physiologists say we undergo a total change every seven years? Perhaps I am terminating one of these periods. As far as age goes, I suppose I am—seven, fourteen, twenty-one—naturally, as every particle and atom of me has changed since I was fourteen, I cannot be the same, mentally or physically."

"Now, Athole," she entreated, "if you are off on your theories——"

"But hear me out," I pleaded; "why should you—or—or any one blame me for a change I cannot help; a change which I did not desire, and most assuredly could not have effected by will or effort, otherwise I would have been a happier woman, Bella. Being different, the same feelings and desires and promises cannot bind me; they bind a different person—a something that has escaped and left me. I—I may have been a fool some years ago—I find I am a fool no longer. It is like waking from a dream

—a spell. One feels free, but cannot explain from whence the freedom came or what will be its results. Now that is exactly how I feel. I stand on ground that is firm. I can be cold and critical instead of blind and impassioned. Am I to be pitied or blamed—or congratulated—or is it only the change effected by the physiological theory?"

"I am inclined to think you are 'daft,'" said Bella, laughing. "Did one ever hear such nonsense? I wish you had had a bairn or two to give you a natural interest in life, and bring you down to the cares and duties of motherhood. I'm sure that is the best thing for a woman. It is what Nature meant her for, and she is safer, and wiser, and happier with a child in her arms, and at her knee, than with all the learning and wisdom and philosophy of—the Queen of Sheba."

I looked somewhat wistfully at the leaping flames—and their many fantastic shapes. Was she right? Had she hit upon a truth in the downright honest fashion of good sense? Were sentiment and imagination only a mistake, a fitting vesture for youth, and the follies of youth? I pushed the thought aside with some impatience.

"I am not that sort of woman, Bella," I said. "I should not have been a good mother. I have always thought so. When I knew my little child was dead, almost in its first hours of life, I think that I was more glad than sorry. The world is so cruel, and I hated to think that another life should suffer, sin, regret—as—as I myself had done. I did not even cry when they took it away, and I knew I should never see it smile, or call me 'mother.' I said to myself, 'It will never do harm to any one. It will know no heartbreak nor sin.' And they all thought I was cold and unfeeling, because I did not cry."

"Oh, Athole—don't talk like that—you break my very heart."

I saw the big, bright drops gather in her eyes, and fall on her crimson wrapper. I sat on dry-eyed and passive. The time had gone by for me when tears were easy, or a relief.

"Do not cry," I entreated. "It is no use—no use. The tears of the world are many as its rivers; but they have not stayed one sorrow, nor staved off one hour of misery; and, listen—the clock is striking midnight, Bella. It is your wedding-day."

CHAPTER IV. A CRY TO THE SILENCE.

FIRST of December—midnight.

It is all over now. The house is quiet, the guests are gone. I have helped Jean to put away the best glass and silver—and seen Grannie to bed, and talked to her till she fell asleep, and now I am alone at last. Alone to think of that meeting with Douglas Hay which to Bella had seemed such an ordeal, and which yet had been a very simple matter.

I was standing by Grannie's side when he and Huel Penryth entered the room; the M'Kayes and Camerons were already there, and old Mr. Gillispie who was to marry Bella. One quick flash from the blue eyes, a sudden paling of the cheek, as glance met glance—then the quiet, formal greeting of conventionality—that was all.

Huel Penryth lingered beside me for a moment. No doubt I looked a mournful object in my sombre widow's dress and cap. Even Grannie had hinted that I might lay aside the latter appendage for that day at least; but I had refused. Why should I make any difference? Bella was no stranger, and if she did not object to my appearance, no one else had any right to do so. I listened quietly to Huel Penryth's kindly sympathy, and his grieved lament on my changed looks. Douglas was standing by pretty, blushing Jessie M'Kaye, whose eager welcome had been flattering enough to show that she at least was glad of his return.

I answered Huel almost coldly. Did he think what Bella had thought? Was he speculating in his own mind as to the value of those external symbols of woe? In all probability he was, and that suspicion made me cold, and stiff, and formal, as I would not otherwise have been.

Ah, well! it is all over now, and I am free to put my thoughts down as I please, and analyse myself and my feelings as microscopically as my fancy inclines.

I have sat here staring at this blank page for a long, long time. Somehow it is not easy to write down the thoughts that throng and surge in my brain. Bella's marriage has so vividly brought back the memory of my own, that I seem to be living over again that time of misery and disillusion which led to it.

Perhaps this memory has added more bitterness to my thoughts of Douglas Hay.

I tell myself how much happier, safer, better my life would have been but for him. Yet, after all, I may be unjust. Am I not rather the ingenious architect of my own misfortunes? I raised a false idol, and blindly worshipped at its shrine; even when I knew it false, I refused to believe in a worthier love and a truer happiness.

Why I only recognise this fact now, now when it is too late for remedy or atonement, I cannot understand; but I know that it is the case.

I wonder whether Douglas Hay will call here to-morrow to see me? Some instinct tells me that he will, though he has said nothing to that effect. Does he remember our last meeting, his wild words, and my indignation? Did he believe in that indignation, I wonder? Could he even dimly imagine the revulsion of feeling, the sudden change in mind, heart, nature, that his wild words and sudden, stormy passion had wrought in me? Probably not. Of all that had happened since—my illness, grief, remorse—he was quite ignorant, and my manner at our meeting to-day could have afforded no clue to such a change.

He had said no word, given no glance that betrayed on his part either meaning or intention, yet some subtle undercurrent of suspicion was at work in my mind, and I knew that we were not destined to part without some sort of explanation.

With a sigh I turn over the pages of my journal. Among them I see that history which Douglas Hay had left for me on the morning of his abrupt departure. It fits into that portion of my own story which ends so abruptly.

I glance at the bold, clear handwriting; I read again those scenes of peril and adventure. It seems strange that any memory of me should have lingered through that time, and filled his thoughts.

How strange men are! Does a woman ever quite understand them? Do they, on their side, ever quite understand us? Certainly not so long as we love and idealise each other. Only when life has brought us calm and dispassionate judgment, do the scales fall from our eyes, and we recognise that even in a faulty human being there may be great, and good, and noble qualities; and that in an almost heroic nature may exist serious blemishes and sins which are so near to vice that almost one wonders that they never actually passed the border line.

And now I will close the book and try to sleep. I wonder as I do so what record will be entered here of to-morrow.

Alas! alas! Is it not always the unexpected that happens? For many a long and weary day my pen has lain idle. No entry of that expected to-morrow set itself on the blank, white page. For in the dawn a hasty summons brought me to Grannie's side, and one look at her face told even my inexperienced eyes that a great and sudden change was there.

Yet there was nothing painful or terrifying about that gradual and peaceful departure. Quietly as one sinks to sleep after long toil and weariness, so she folded her tired hands, and closed her eyes on things of earth for ever.

Now it seemed to me that indeed I was alone—utterly alone, since she had left me. As I went to my own little room, and drew down the blinds to shut out the intrusive light, I thought of the day when I had first come there, of the morning when I had opened my eyes to the dancing sunbeams, and had seen the sweet, kind face, so anxious and so loving, bend over me as she bade me drink the cup of milk in her hand.

It seemed such a little thing, and yet the memory touched me as few others could do.

I threw myself on the bed in a storm of passionate grief. Not for any sorrow, any loss, had I wept as I wept then.

And now it is all over—the dark hours and days in the little lonely house; the dreary preparations; the funeral in the quaint burial-ground of Tom-na-hurich. And I am alone here with old Jean, for Grannie has left the house and furniture, and everything she possessed, to me. I was astonished when they told me; but I recognise now the kindly love and thought that gave to me the house where I had been happier than in any place my life had known. I have money enough to keep it up, and so I resolve to remain here. Bella has not yet come back. They have not told her of what has happened, not liking to darken the early days of her wedded life with the shadow of death.

December the eighth.

Old Jean has just been in for what she calls "a bit gossip." She tells me that old David Hay, Douglas Hay's father, is

dead. He died last night. Well, Douglas will be rich and independent now. I wonder whether he will go out to Australia—or remain in Inverness?

How strange that I should care nothing for what he does—that he seems to stand so far away from my life, and all concerning it!

He cannot be grieved at his father's death. They were never good friends, and the old man treated him very badly. Still it is strange that we should both be mourners almost at the same time.

December the twelfth.

A dreary, melancholy day. The snow had been falling ever since daybreak. I know that old David Hay was buried to-day. Not at Tom-na-hurich; but in the old kirkyard at Inverness—where lies that young, unhappy wife whose heart he broke by coldness and neglect.

I ask no questions as to Douglas Hay's intentions—or movements. I have a vague feeling that he will write or come to me soon. I hope, with all my heart, that he is not going to stay in the town.

A summons from old Jean. I am wanted in the parlour. A visitor.

"Who is it, Jean?" I ask.

"It's Mr. Hay. He was no' sure that you'd see him; but he just bade me to enquire."

For a moment I hesitate—only a moment. Then I say, quickly:

"Yes, Jean, I will come down."

ON BEING AN ORPHAN.

CLEARLY it is a state not without its advantages. At first they are not so very apparent. It seems to the rest of us mortally hard that the poor little mite should have no mother or "dadda" to turn its eyes towards, in full trust of what the one or the other shall do to it. Even the best of substitutes for a mother must surely be a very weak make-shift. Not one aunt in a thousand may play the part with entire success, and a charitable institution, though ever so reputable, and with ever so long a list of benevolent gentlemen upon its committee, must, as a general rule, take rank below the average aunt or grandmother.

But the inevitable compensation steps in to salve the wound. I suppose there is no doubt that the boy who grows up to

manhood without ever knowing what it is to have a father's hand interposed between himself and the consequences of imprudent actions, is likely to be fit to try fistick with the world a good deal sooner than he would have been with a father to share, or even absorb, his earlier responsibilities.

Again, there are fathers of a kind by which no son would benefit. The men who regard children as a nuisance; to whom their proper home is the most obnoxious spot upon the earth; and who have no notion of seeing their own offspring develop into men and women more respectable than themselves—such parents as these may just as well be dead and out of the way of the budding intelligence of the children who are indebted to them for their introduction into the courts of life.

It is a stock subject for sermonising. Whitechapel on Saturday night abounds with fathers who can do little but distress their children. The babies may not be able to explain why they feel so relieved when they are told they will never again see "dadda"; but it is a fact that "dadda," in dying, often thus unwittingly does his first good deed since he took unto himself a wife. While he lived he was a stumbling-block to his children, if nothing worse. No one is more astonished than are the children themselves to realise how faculties, hitherto undreamt of in them, suddenly spring to light and add to their happiness now that he, the stumbling-block, is removed.

An election day at any of the great orphan asylums in the land affords some strong spectacles even for the man with a sufficiently hard heart. The children are less interesting than the mothers, or those who have hitherto acted more or less like mothers. To be sure, some of them show passion and distress. But it is of a vague kind. They guess that something is about to happen, in which they are to have a part; but they do not quite know what. They are thus petulant, rather than passionate, as a rule. The children who stamp with their feet, struggle violently rather than consent to be separated from their mothers, and sob forth tearful infantine threats of what they will do, are quite exceptions.

Some of the mothers look heart-broken; and no wonder, poor souls. They are in their "widow's" weeds—and perhaps the boy or girl that holds them so tight by the hand is an only child. They act for the

child's good, not for their own relief. It has been set before them by their friends and relatives; votes have been offered; the advantages to the little one and to the mother of free board and lodging, and education for ten years or more, are, if anything, exaggerated; and so the mother has been won over. It was not easy, even at the outset, to consent to this prudent, but—as it seems to her now more than ever—cold-blooded arrangement. Hence, the moment of parting having come, it is all she can do to keep from breaking her contract, and giving her votes to another more in earnest than herself.

As like as not, ere the child is a year older, this young mother will be married again. It was part of the plot—though she did not know it. And so, little by little, it is possible that her feelings may chill towards the child of her former husband. And the child, too, will repay neglect with forgetfulness; and so the years will roll on until, at the age of fifteen, it is sent out into the world, almost friendless, to open the oyster.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to distinguish the parents who are unlikely to be of much service to the children if these fail to be elected. They chat freely to each other, and discuss their "chances" with much less feeling than you see in a couple of speculators on the issue of the Derby.

The expression with which such a woman awaits the result of the poll is not pleasing. No tears bedim her eyes, and she is rather rough with the "pale-looking thing," her son, when it transpires she is again outside the list. Perhaps the best one could wish for the boy would be his election next year. The atmosphere of an orphan asylum is not exactly invigorating; but it has some good qualities that his mother's house probably lacks.

At what age does a person cease to be an orphan? One's grandfather is likely to be without father and mother; but no one thinks of him as an orphan, nor does the world tender to the busy man in the City, middle-aged and plump, the conventional terms of sympathy which come to our lips about a child who is pointed out to us as being motherless and fatherless.

I fancy the age is somewhere on the border of the first of the teens. At any rate, that is the time when old ladies cease those smooth caresses of theirs, with the words, "Poor little fellow!" or "Bereaved

darling!" which hitherto were their wonted form of salutation. They also then, in many cases, abruptly end that much more agreeable function of pity which shows itself in the bestowal of welcome tips, pleasing alike the giver and the receiver. Perhaps it is because they then espy the man in the boy, and their maidenliness takes fright. Nor do they, after that time, urge the little orphan to drink wine and eat cake half as warmly as they used in the days when he was but about as tall as the table.

Certainly that is the time when the average boy has cut himself adrift from his mother's apron-strings. He no longer feels that she is indispensable, as in the earlier days, when the mere thought that some day she will die, was apt to bring soaking tears upon his pillow. Not that his love for her has lessened. Oh dear, no! It is at its hottest, its most chivalrous pitch, with something of the man in it and all the ardour of the boy. She is a being to watch over and fight for now, as well as to love at all times, and be conciliated for the sake of particular needs of person and pocket. But the cut fingers and bruises which of old were displayed to her, perhaps with glistening eyes of appeal, are now pook-pooed with magnificent contempt. Chance, with a little salt or sand, may attend to their healing instead of the mother.

The unmistakable orphan at seven or eight has a knack of becoming a downright boy of the world at thirteen or fourteen. He is an awful pickle; and yet trouble and rows compose an atmosphere in which he finds himself much at ease. It is odd if he does not make up his mind to be a midshipman. The unfortunate person who is chiefly responsible for his guardianship has his hands full, and probably gets rid of the burden by packing the lad off to sea to learn discipline where it is best taught. But if he lives with an aunt of no very obdurate kind, a maiden, it may be that his very audacity, and the wickedness of his escapades, win her affection to such a degree that he has practically the freedom of the house, and a blank sheet of forgiveness from her for all the offences he may commit.

I know well that such amiable aunts do not grow on the hedges. But they exist; and if the orphans they take in hand are sound at the heart, they need never, with such guardianship, feel the lack of a mother. The turbulent days of their

spoiling will soon pass, and discretion will come in the morning, long ere they have sinned irremediably against themselves and their chances in the world.

The average orphan in the world is much like the average novice in a public school. At first it is very disagreeable. He is dreadfully puzzled, plagued, and distressed. There seems meaning nowhere. He is but a little pallid leaf, drifting before the wind, severed ere its time from the parent tree. Goodness knows whither the wind will carry the leaf. It may get jerked into the brown brook over the way, with the white ducks in it, tail upwards, looking so very ridiculous. Then it will soon get clogged with the dirty water, and so it will go to the bottom, and there will be an end to its individuality. At the best, it may fall softly into the roadway, there to be trodden under one foot after another until it is decomposed, and lives again by metempsychosis in some other form.

Nothing is more remarkable than the development of the public schoolboy from the timid little creature who sets foot upon the threshold of the school. His own mother would hardly know him at the end of the year, if he were able to lay bare to her the manifold notions and aspirations which have in the meantime come upon him.

I am inclined to think it is better to let a plant run wild a little, and blossom out in its own way, rather than trim and prune it after a fashion of one's own. The much-besnipped myrtles and box-trees of Dutch and Italian gardens are curious enough; but they seem to have little grace or beauty compared to the tree growing in the open, with its twigs ever un mutilated by shears. It is not quite the same with children, or else King Solomon has misled us. Nevertheless, give me the hearty, wilful orphan boy who follows his heart's desire, even though with too much zeal, rather than the child sempiternally kept in subjection to the will of a parent with hard-and-fast ideas of what a boy ought to be, and a stern determination to bring his boy into conformity with such ideas.

It is, doubtless, going too far to say that the majority of men who have become distinguished in the more active walks of life had the advantage to begin life as orphans. Yet there is something genuine in the suggestion. The orphan is not trammelled with inherited responsibilities.

He has no father, with an ambition to couple his son's name with his in the bacon or tobacco business which he has so carefully fostered from a very small beginning. He has no scruple to hinder him from trying his various faculties and inclinations, to see which it suits him best to make the sheet-anchor of his livelihood. If he has a desire to see the world, there are many ways open to him; and the reproaches of no one for whom he need care inordinately stand in his path as obstacles. No matter if he comes to grief here and there in his "preliminary cantera." While he is young he cannot help being buoyant; and each "cropper" does but teach him how in the future to avoid a repetition of such disaster.

The paternal authority is good when the "pater" himself is a good and wise man. But even then prejudices will occasionally interfere with the father's wisdom. It is altogether distressing to the grown man to be told by the stripling, for example, that he—the stripling—has an irresistible inclination to become an artist or an author. Probably in nine cases out of ten, at the very least, the elder does well to set down the heavy foot of his authority upon the youngster's hopes in the matter. Still, there is the tenth, for whose disappointment the success of the nine in other ways cannot be said to atone.

So with the orphan. It is hardly quite true that he is an *Ishmael* in the world. But it is little less than providential that he should be led, as he is often, to fancy that every one's hand is against him, and that, therefore, it behoves him to keep himself braced, and ready to act on the defensive. Thus forewarned by his imagination, he is not to be caught napping like the boy used to the paternal shield and buckler, but quite unused to the shocks and slights which assail the man who stands alone.

I call to mind the career of an orphan whom I knew from the beginning of his boyhood. He was a dishevelled little wretch when he entered the somewhat select preparatory school, which proffered about forty of us our initial step up the ladder of life. For a year or so he was despised of every one, and the butt of innumerable jeers, which would have broken the spirit of any one but a thoroughbred orphan. But all the time he was advancing upon us by leaps and bounds. Though he had no mother to make him neat and clean, he had his mother wit. I suppose

he had the smallest money allowance of any of us. But he had a genius for finance; and so it transpired anon that he got half of us into his meshes in our various moods of lavish expenditure. Having thus acquired a definite ascendancy, he quickly rose above us in other ways also. He had good abilities; and he did not mind exercising them now. Before, it would have been as much as his peace of mind and body's comfort would have been worth. But, having got us in his toils, he could do as he pleased.

The boy's success followed him from this little school to the greater school in which he finished his education. He was now a masterful fellow, a leader in everything, with a strong spirit of apparent recklessness, that gained him the admiration of his juniors. He was handsome, too, in a fortuitous manner. I mean that he was not good-looking, and nothing of a dandy, but owed his attractiveness to the free vigour of his mind. Yet all the while he kept the bridle upon his impulses: he had learnt enough of the wisdom of the world to know that, with skilful management, it is possible to please at the same time parties who may be said to be in mortal opposition to each other. And so he remained until he left school, and went to London, to see how he and the law could become friends. But he had not been a student in Gray's Inn more than two years when word passed that he had married a ward in Chancery. It was a clandestine affair, and there was some peril about it. But he had taken the measure of the peril beforehand with fair exactitude. Now he is a county magnate of fame, with as sterling a future before him as any man could wish for. The ward in Chancery—a pretty girl, by the way—has brought him four stout boys, as well as an excellent estate of pounds, shillings, and pence.

It may really be said that a mother and father are to some of us luxuries that tend to enervate us, and make us less able to carve out our fortune than we would be were we thrown on our own resources.

However, not every orphan may hope to show extraordinary pluck and self-confidence; nor would it, upon the whole, be well that those of us who begin life without certain of the advantages of an orphan should, for the sake of the experiment, cut ourselves adrift from our progenitors with as little apparent reluctance as a fledged bird shows when it flies away from the home nest.

FAIRS AND SHOWS.

PLEASANT are the memories of our old country fair as it still existed in the early Victorian age. Happy was the omen if the morning opened bright and promising, for a wet fair was a calamity for the whole district. But with sunshine and a smiling morn how exhilarating was the scene! The wide high street was already filled with flocks, and herds, and a delightful babel of sounds arose upon the breeze—the continuous baaing of sheep, the barking of dogs, and shrill cries of shepherds, the bellowing of oxen, and the hoarse shouts of the drovers. All night long strange mysterious sounds might have been heard, the creaking of wheels, the rumble of heavy caravans; while a ponderous tread that shook the window-frames, might have awakened sleepers with notions of an earthquake, when some one would whisper, "'tis the elephants." There had been digging, too, and delving, and the gabble of voices in the hours of darkness; and the morning's light disclosed long rows of white booths, which made shady alleys of the side walks, while beyond arose a confused mass of wooden structures with tall masts, and fluttering banners, and pictured emblems of the wonders of the fair.

The fair was an event in those days, and formed an era in the lives of quiet country people. House-cleaning must be over and done with before fair-day; and sitting-room fires must be given up, and the grates adorned with coloured shavings for the opening of May fair. Every country cousin or outlying acquaintance was sure to turn up at the fair.

There was Duke Sparrable who had been a dandy once, and squandered all his money, but who managed to borrow a nag for the fair, and with his whip and top-boots, and empty laugh, cut as fine a figure as any. There, too, was cousin Pinkerton, the politest man in the world, primed with old-fashioned compliments for the ladies, but dreaded by boys for his artful questions about the Latin grammar. And gay old beaux, with great starched frills, by way of shirt-fronts, and bunches of golden seals at their fobs, appeared on this occasion only, and laughed, and quaffed, and attacked the cold beef with a vigour that put to rest any suspicion that they might be only so many ghostly revivals of the past.

What crowds of rosy-gilled, clean-

shaven farmers, in low-crowned beavers and swallow-tailed coats, whose tax-carts filled the roomy inn-yards, and overflowed into the open fields beyond! And how the leather-legged chaps, as Cobbett calls them, tramped in, all in new yellow leggings, and the whitest of smock-frocks, the latter often adorned with marvels of patient needlework!

This same country fair is still in existence—the sheep are there, and the oxen, only not so many of them. Serious-looking bearded men in long mackintoshes or ulsters, represent the jolly, rosy farmers of other days. There are smock-frocks, too; but they are of the cheap slop-shop character. The drovers, and dealers, the shepherds, and the lookers from the marsh, these have not altered much in all these years. And there are shows, too; but these are of the order that is small and cheap. Everything has dwindled, except the merry-go-rounds and swing-boats; but these have taken new form and development from the growth of the mechanical arts. The wooden horses of old were caricatures of that noble animal, and were whirled round by manifest human agency. But now we have steam roundabouts, with prancing steeds, and practicable manes and tails, that really do prance as well as go round, in a fashion that ought to ensure against sea-sickness the organism that can endure it. What do you say to a switchback railway with cars that emulate the motion of the noble steed, all within the narrow round of a travelling show? The roundabouts of other days were accompanied by no other music than the joyous or half-terrified shouts of the youngsters; but now we have wonderful din and clangour from the centre of each pavilion, where a machine that aspires to be a whole brass band in itself fills the air with terrible sounds. But we listen in vain for the happy hum of the crowd of other days, for the shouts of unthinking, instinctive gaiety that spread like an infection. Even the show people admit that fairs are not of much good to them now-days. They don't bring the crowd together, and a showman who means to live and thrive must seek the people where they are to be found.

Far different was it in those other days, when, on the broad green that bordered the High Street,

A fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation.

It was Richardson's, or it might be

Gyngell's theatre, where everything was as bright as brass, and varnish, and gilding could make it. The platform fenced in with green baize, and every one on the look-out for the parade that heralded each performance. Forth came the gay cavaliers, in gay doublets and russet boots; the black-visaged villain in the slouched hat; the angelic creatures in short skirts and spangled bodices; the première tragédienne, in black velvet and pearls. Was it "The Monk and the Murderer," or "The Spectre of the Danube," or other blood-curdling drama that was on the boards, it was sure to be short and thrilling, with a ghost, a combat, and a murder, and retributive justice dealt all round in quick succession. But the show outside was the thing, after all, when all the characters twirled and chassed about the platform, and a really excellent band, its members attired in gorgeous uniforms of Hussars or Beefeaters, as might be, discoursed sweet music, and gratis all.

And there is some interest in "Richardson's," as being the last representative of the theatrical booth, with its band of strolling players, which might boast of having supplied recruits to the larger stage of the great London theatres. Richardson himself used to boast of having trained the great Edmund Kean, who played in Richardson's show, at Battersea Fair, in 1806, and was, at that time, of the company. And the old showman would speak slightly of Macready, as "some wagabone as ain't had any reglar eddication," not having taken his degree. Richardson, indeed, was hardly of our time, for he died in 1836, full of years, and leaving behind him a snug fortune. But his booth lived after him, and, under the direction of Nelson Lee, continued the round of the fairs until 1853, when the whole plant of the concern was sold and dispersed.

This Nelson Lee was said to be the son of an old Peninsular Colonel. But the Colonel himself, perhaps, had some showman's blood in him, for the name is one familiar to the treatler, and we have Lee and Harper's great theatrical booth at Southwark Fair, in 1731. Also at the same fair, in 1734, we have Lee's booth, with the "Siege of Troy," the only droll of that kind, as the playbill recites, "first brought to perfection by the late famous Mrs. Mynns, and can only be performed by her daughter, Mrs. Lee." This is interesting, as in Hogarth's well-known print of Southwark Fair, it is the "Siege

of Troy" which is being performed at the booth by the church, with the rope-dancer twirling about in the background, while in front, the platform comes crashing down with the unfortunate performers of "The Fall of Bajazet." And Lee's was also well-known at Bartholomew's Fair, when Henry Fielding, the novelist, ran his show; and when the great patent theatres would close at times, while their chief performers picked up showers of gold and silver at the fair.

Well, Richardson saw the end of Bartholomew's Fair, that once great gathering, originally brought together by a jester turned monk, Rahere, the founder and head of the Priory of St. Bartholomew. That famous and illustrious fair, whose humours were illustrated by the wit and learning of Ben Jonson, and made famous generations of buffoons, from the mediæval jester, with his japes, to the modern clown, whose wheezes, inherited mostly from his ancestors, still set the audience in a roar at pantomime times. A fair, too, that has fostered and rewarded true dramatic genius in its time; and Richardson saw the real end of it all, and ceased to attend it before he died, although the fair lingered on in a moribund state till 1855, when it was proclaimed for the last time.

And now what have we left of dramatic entertainment at our country fair? Verily there is still a booth, and it may bear the honoured name of Richardson, as most of such shows do that still keep the road. But it is a very small affair—a family matter; and instead of the band of beefeaters we have a magnified barrel-organ, with a boy grinding out crashing chords with a winch; and the noise collects a small crowd of gaping rustics, who watch the motions of the performers as they go through the time-honoured dance on the platform.

Now should we hear the gong—old Richardson was a great performer on that instrument—and the ancient formula, which was in use, no doubt, when Shakespeare himself was a strolling player, "Walk up! walk up! The players! the players! The only booth in the fair. Just a-going to begin!"

And up we go—a thin and intermittent trickle of spectators. Admission is twopence, and there is another penny to pay for reserved seats in front close to the orchestra, which is composed of an old gentleman with a cornet-à-piston, who

sounds a note of preparation, but does not persevere; and a young lady at a minute harmonium, who plays the curtain up, and then disappears. The proscenium opening is some eight feet by twelve; but it is big enough for the representation of the "Grand Spectacular Drama of Cinderella."

There is a flat representing the kitchen fire, and the saucepans and gridirons, its accessories, and Cinderella enters, who has slipped on a faded ulster over her short skirt; enters the harsh father, in feathered hat and doublet, with his cruel daughter in a well-worn silk dress and lace bonnet. The whole affair is transacted with a very few words, and Cinderella is left lamenting; when enters a policeman, who does duty as the fairy godmother; and Cinderella skips forth, in her shabby old spangled skirt, and disappears on the arm of the policeman. The next scene is of a staircase, with a hastily-sketched clock on the top, which is already pointing to midnight. Again the action is rapid; father and cruel daughter appear in the dazzling hall—there ought to have been an umbrella-stand, but the scenic artist had not room for that. The prince, in a shabby great-coat, appears; but he won't dance with that girl—oh, no! but as Cinderella appears on the arm of her policeman, he is ready, but not too eager, to dance with her. Then there is some business with a shoe, transacted with the same laudable rapidity. Cinderella pairs off with the prince, and the cruel sister falls into the grasp of the policeman. Then there is a harlequinade, in which the *raison-d'être* of the policeman is made evident. And then, after a quick burst of seven minutes and a half, the audience escape by a side entrance.

It was tame, spiritless, dreary with all its rapidity—this latter-day performance in the theatrical booth; but then the outlook from the footlights must have been equally dreary and depressing to the performers.

More popular than the booth, and doing better business, are the shooting-galleries, especially those which give a shot at bottles suspended high in the air. And knock-'em-downs are always in vogue; and the cocoa-nut—"all milky ones guaranteed"—is a perennial favourite. Among novelties, introduced from France within the last decade or so, is the board stuck all over with knives, at which competitors cast rings of wood or iron, and can claim

the knife if they succeed in putting the ring over it. Then there is a travelling Fisheries Exhibition, with models and mechanical figures. A conjuring tent, described as the "home of mystery and magic," gains a certain amount of patronage. The performing dogs and monkeys have their adherents. But a thing to be noticed is the increasing popularity of the charlatan, who at one time seemed to be tending to extinction, but is now more in evidence than ever, with pills and potions, and gratuitous tooth-drawing for the masses.

Nor is the small travelling circus altogether extinct, although the great, highly-organised establishments which traverse the country at intervals, and which pursue their own routes without regard to country fairs, have almost extinguished their smaller rivals. "There is only room for one big tent in England," says an authority on the subject; and the smaller travelling shows have to be content with the mere crumbs of the entertainment.

At the old country fair, alongside the great theatrical booth, there was pretty surely to be found a wild-beast show of some pretension. Wombwell's was then a name to conjure by, and his travelling menageries made a fair of themselves wherever they stopped, and were deservedly popular among all classes. But there were mighty masters of wild beasts before Wombwell.

Ballard's menagerie held the ground in the early days of the century. In 1810 Ballard's caravans were on their way to Bartholomew Fair from the West, when, in Piccadilly, a horse took fright, a caravan was overturned, and two monkeys and a leopard made their escape. What became of the monkeys is not recorded, but the leopard caused a considerable scare in the neighbourhood, and was only recaptured after a long chase, after frightening the passengers by early coaches, and terrifying belated roysterers into sudden sobriety, but doing no further damage.

Of Ballard's, too, was the famous lioness which attacked the Exeter Mail in 1817. Ballard's caravans were on their way to Salisbury Fair, when the lioness escaped and came upon the coach, which had just changed horses at the inn called the "Winterlow Hut," seven miles from Salisbury. The lioness sprang upon the leader and fastened her claws in its neck and shoulders. The passengers evacuated the

coach in horror and dismay; but the coachman stuck to his box, the guard to his mails, and a mastiff, belonging to the inn, boldly attacked the huge beast, which, turning upon the dog, killed him with a blow of the paw. Then she made off into the fields, pursued, at a respectful distance, by a posse of grooms and stable-boys, headed by the mail-guard in his tarnished red coat with his formidable blunderbuss. The lioness took refuge under a granary, and her growls could be heard half a mile off; but the intrepid guard was about to fire upon her, when Ballard and the keepers appeared upon the scene and succeeded in pacifying the animal and leading it back to its cage.

As for Wombwell—who is said to have begun life as a cobbler, in Monmouth Street, St. Giles's—his show first came into notoriety from a sensational, but cruel, affair at Warwick, in 1825, where he put up Nero and Wallace, two of his lions, to be baited by dogs: a sport that proved fatal to most of the dogs. But a terrible incident in the history of the show was the fate of Helen Blight, the Lion Queen, worried to death by her performing animals in the sight of hundreds of spectators.

More fortunate was another lion-queen, Miss Chapman, who married Mr. George Sanger, and whom many will remember as representing Britannia with a noble lion couchant at her feet, in a gorgeous open car, at Sanger's triumphant entries into country towns. Many years have elapsed since the writer saw Sanger's great procession passing down Gabriel's Hill, in Maidstone. The hill was steep, the roads were bad, there is, or was, a short turn at the bottom. Britannia's car gave a fearful lurch; but it was admirable to see the dignity and self-possession with which the lady and the lion readjusted their respective positions and resumed their stately pose.

Famous, too, was Crockett, originally Sanger's lion-king, who went to America with Howe and Cushing, and died, before all the spectators, in the ring at Chicago; but of heart disease, and not by the lion's paw.

But the most picturesque figure of all was Makomo, a splendid African, with great golden rings in ears and nose, whose performance with Mander's lions and tigers were the admiration of all beholders. Makomo died quietly in his bed in 1870; but his successor, Macarthy, was killed at

Bolton while going through his performances.

Thus it will be seen that there is a considerable spice of danger and adventure in the life of a travelling showman in the wild-beast line. Yet these collections are likely to continue to exist and flourish. Zoological gardens have never succeeded well in the provinces, and the travelling show has the advantage of novelty and of exhibiting by night, when the animals are fully awake and at their liveliest. And there is nothing to equal the sensation of the lion's roar on the village green, where the arrival of the yellow vans, the elephants, and camels, sets all the neighbourhood agog, liberates the schoolboys from their tasks, and gives the hard-working hind an evening's delight.

As good as ever is Sanger's famous collection, which now spends the winter at the Agricultural Hall, and seemed the other day in the very finest condition, notwithstanding the hard winter. It would not be easy to match the elephants for general sagacity and knowledge of what is going on, especially in the cake and biscuit market.

There are no fairs nowadays big enough to take such a menagerie out of its accustomed route. Its arrival causes everywhere a fête to spring up, and numbers of side shows and minor exhibitions keep alongside of it to share in the traffic it causes.

Indeed, it strikes one that although the fair, as a popular festival, has declined in importance, yet the number of shows and showmen has, of late, increased, while the bands of travelling artistes who strive to amuse the crowds of our great cities, show no signs of diminution.

In a different category are the shows which rely upon the attractions of human specimens of a more or less monstrous character. Giants will always be in favour. Dwarfs, if sufficiently dwarfish, will have crowds of admirers to the end of the chapter. Ladies, like the celebrated Miss Biffen, the heroine of Bartholomew's, who, born without arms, drew people's portraits with her toes, will always attract attention.

And even now, as the chains of winter are loosened, the army of travelling showmen is preparing for its summer campaign. Great and small, they will soon be all upon the wing, as races, fairs, and merry-makings of all kinds attract them hither and thither.

THE ART TREASURES OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

FOURTH (AND LAST) PART.

THE PLATE OF THE LIVERY COMPANIES.

IN Puritan times, what little plate was manufactured was of a very plain character, as if typical of the period. The same design as that which appears in the cups made prior to the Civil War was retained, that is, the high cup with a baluster stem; but the bowl and the stem were stripped of all enrichments. The bowl has in some cases the arms of the Company engraved thereon; but generally a wide frosted band covers the greater part, leaving just a rim of plain metal at the top and bottom. The Master of the Mint's Cup, dated 1650, belonging to the Goldsmiths, is perhaps somewhat more ornamental. The Mercers have three loving-cups, 1653, which are quite plain and very large. The Skinners have one, 1650. The Barbers have four, all the gift at various times of Edward Arria, Master in 1651. The bowl in some of these cups is not so square-shaped as in the preceding period; it tapers more towards the bottom, and frequently has a projecting lip. The Fishmongers have a very good loving-cup of this shape, though rather later in date, 1664; the form, however, seems to have been revived at different periods, for the Merchant-Tailors have some cups of this shape, one of which, the Brett Cup, dates from 1680. It is as large as those belonging to the Mercers, and has a cover surmounted by a knob, whereas all the cups just mentioned have no covers. This cover is possibly of later date. The Ironmongers, in the Humphry Cup, 1710, have a still later reproduction of this class of cup, although this may possibly be an older one, which was presented to the Company in that year. There is much to admire in their simplicity; the shape is generally good, and the baluster stems of good outline, with a wide-spreading foot; they are nearly always silver-gilt, and generally of large size. There is an exception to these last two rules in a cup belonging to the Barbers, dated 1653. It is small in size, very plain, with a baluster stem, and a plain bell-shaped cover, surmounted by a figure of Britannia. The Haberdashers have also a small cup of this

class, known as the Stone Cup, 1650, but it is silver-gilt, and has no cover.

With the Restoration this plain type of cup was superseded by a more enriched variety. The shape was retained, but the bowl and stem were enriched with foliage in relief, as was also the cover, which again came into fashion. The model of these cups is the Hanbury Cup, belonging to the Goldsmiths, dated 1608, which has already been referred to. The Sanders Cup, 1666, belonging to the Grocers; the Fisher Cup, 1661, belonging to the Saddlers; and the Waldo Cup, 1661, belonging to the Clothworkers; are all on the same style as the Hanbury Cup. The cover in each case is surmounted by an animal, generally representing the crest of the Company. While they do not compare in shape and design with those of the beginning of the reign of James the First, these cups are superior, at least, so far as design is concerned, to those that follow.

Of these, the principal in interest is the one presented by Charles the Second, in 1676, to the Barbers' Company. It is known as the Royal Oak Cup. The stem is a natural representation of the trunk of a tree; and the bowl, cover, and foot are covered with a mass of oak leaves very naturally rendered. From the bowl depend four large acorns. The effect is rich, but in bad taste; and there is great want of repose. In this particular the design compares very unfavourably with the Henry the Eighth Cup belonging to the same Company, where the ornament is properly subordinated.

The Clothworkers possess, in the Pepys Cup, 1677, the largest loving-cup to be found in the collections of the Livery Companies. It cannot be denied that it is a very handsome cup; but it owes a great deal of its beauty to the fact that it is parcel gilt. The bowl, of silver-gilt, is enclosed in a casing of elaborately-chased and pierced flower and scroll-work, which is of plain silver. The gilt of the bowl is, therefore, seen through the pierced work. The cover and stem are very elaborately decorated; in fact, there is too much decoration, for the cup, which is a much better shape than the Royal Oak Cup, would be more satisfactory if not so overloaded with ornament. It stands twenty-three inches high. It was presented to the Company by Samuel Pepys, who was Master in 1677.

Another cup, of the same period, belongs also to the Clothworkers. The Rawlinson

Cup is more allied in shape to the Waldo Cup, but is more extravagantly ornamented. The Vintners' Rawlinson Cup, which is nearly as large as the Pepys Cup, is ten years later, and is in better taste. In all these cups the execution is very good; it is only to the design that any objection can be taken.

A curious cup, of a slightly earlier period, is the Caudle, or Posset Cup, dated 1654, belonging to the Clothworkers. It is pear-shaped, very plain in design, with two solid ring handles. The posset, which was made of milk curdled with wine, and other ingredients, was put into the cup. The curd floated on to the top, and, being in the narrower part, or neck of the cup, was easily removed.

Another curiosity of the reign of Charles the Second, is to be seen at Vintners' Hall in the Milkmaid Cup. It is small, being only seven inches high, and takes the form of a milkmaid holding over her head a small pannikin; the body, being inverted, forms a cup, and the pannikin, at the same time turning on its axis, forms a smaller one beneath it, both of which are then filled with wine: the idea being that the larger cup must be emptied first, without spilling the contents of the smaller one.

This is the only cup of this kind in the City, although there are several to be found in private collections, and two or three may be seen in the shop window of a well-known silversmith in Regent Street. They have no hall-mark, and may, possibly, be of French origin. The right word to describe them is, quaint. Artistically, they must be classed along with the Cokayne cups and leopard snuff-boxes of the Skinners' Company.

A very beautiful cup, of unusual design, is the Rich Cup, 1681, belonging to the Saddlers' Company. It is porringer-shape, of plain silver, with two handles and a flat cover. The lower part of the bowl is covered with acanthus leaves. In style it is very much allied to the tankards described below, especially the Irish tankard belonging to the Merchant Taylors, which is of the same date.

Thomas Waldo, the donor of a cup already referred to, also presented the Clothworkers' Company with a drum-salt, ornamented with the same style of repoussé work as the cup. This style of repoussé is of Flemish origin, and differs from the Italian style so frequently used by Cellini and his followers, in that the

metal is not beaten out into such distinct forms, but is formed into scrolls and shields, which grow one out of the other. This is possibly the latest of the drum-salts, if the pedestal salt-cellar, known as the Rushout Salt, belonging to the Fishmongers' Company, be excepted.

A different form is now given to these curious articles of domestic plate. They are made very much larger, of plain silver-gilt, without any ornamentation, save moulding. Standing on a large base, the pedestal diminishes to the centre, and then spreads out again to the same size as the base, to form a plateau for the salt. At the angles are horns, or volute guards, to carry the table-napkin which covered the salt. The earliest, dating from about 1670, belongs to the Clothworkers, who possess four, all of which are square in shape. The Skinners have one, known as the Masters' Salt, which dates from 1676, and is octagonal. The Mercers have three, dated ten years later, of the same shape as the last. They all stand about six inches high, and are about the same diameter. The finest salt-cellar of this kind belongs to the Goldsmiths; in this the volute guards take the form of birds with their wings spread, which give it a very handsome appearance. This is probably the latest of these famous articles of plate, as they were not made after this century, except as replicas.

Salvers, or rose-water dishes, do not appear to have been common during the Commonwealth; possibly the refinements of rinsing the fingers with rose-water was looked upon by the Puritans as a frivolous practice, although they do not appear to have objected to the cup that cheers.

It is a common practice to speak indiscriminately of rose-water dishes and salvers. There is, of course, a distinct difference: the rose-water dish can very seldom be used as a salver or server for standing such things as glasses on. The bottom frequently has a knob, and, except in the very plain ones, is always of hollow—as opposed to flat—section, and ornamented with high relief. There are very few salvers, properly so called—in fact, with one exception, there are none—belonging to the Livery Companies which date before the present century. The Skinners' Company has a pair of silver patens, dated 1684, which were probably used for the same purpose as salvers.

There are two hammered rose-water

dishes, dated 1663, belonging to the Barbers. The Alington salver, dated 1676, belongs to the Fishmongers' Company. It is quite plain, save only for the arms and inscription engraved on it. The Pepys and Williamson salvers, 1677, belonging to the Clothworkers' Company, which are contemporary with the cups of the same donors, are both very ornate, with very high relief of flowers and scroll-work. The Merchant Taylors have a rose-water dish, 1684, which is perfectly plain; so that so far as those of this period are concerned, no particular style seems to have obtained. The plain ones are generally silver-gilt, and the more ornate plain silver.

Late in the century the Goldsmiths became possessed of a very handsome one of silver-gilt. Up to this period all the salvers had been made with straight rims; but this one is scalloped out with bold scrolls, separated by masks and shells. It is also the first salver that has feet, and is the exception above referred to, when mention is made of the use of the word salver. The copy at South Kensington is described as belonging to the seventeenth century; it must be very late in the century. It is known at Goldsmiths' Hall as the Queen Anne Plateau.

Towards the end of this century rose-water ewers begin to appear. The Merchant Taylors and Saddlers have one each of plain silver of the same date, 1684. They are shaped like very deep cups, with a fluted bowl and a short stem; the handle is rather plain, and stands higher than the bowl, and the lip, or spout, is very small.

The end of the century, also, for the first time brings into fashion the large punch-bowls, which are known as Monteiths. They were so called after a gentleman of fashion, who wore his coats much scalloped at the bottom, in fancied resemblance of the rims of these punch-bowls. The following couplet is found in a contemporary cookery-book:

New things produce new words, and so Monteith
Has by one vessel, saved himself from death.

The earliest of these Monteiths are the two dated 1676, which belong to the Skinners' Company; they are much plainer than the later ones, being simply divided into parts by a small moulding; the rims have simple indentations, which in later examples become much more pronounced. These indentations are presumed to have

held the glasses which were hung around the bowl with their stems outward, for the purpose of being carried into the room, for no drinker of punch would allow it to be concocted outside. The bowls are about a foot in diameter, and have ring drop handles depending from lions' heads.

The Vintners have three Monteiths of plain silver, dated from 1698 to 1702. These have gadroon or fluted work on the bowls, and the rims are very elaborately scalloped. The Fishmongers and the Merchant Taylors, the Haberdashers and the Mercers have some of a very similar kind. In fact, with the exception of the two belonging to the Skinners, there is a great family likeness in all these punch-bowls, the difference being only in size. One of the Merchant Taylors' is, however, of silver-gilt, which is very uncommon. They were all manufactured about the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. It is stated in Cripps's book that the scalloped rim, holding the glasses, was removed while the punch was being made. In case of those belonging to the Livery Companies this was not so, and none of the rims can possibly have been removable. There is a copy in the South Kensington Museum of one belonging to Dublin University, which has a moveable rim. This Monteith is, however, much smaller and deeper in the bowl than any of those referred to. These punch-bowls are perhaps the most characteristic pieces of Queen Anne plate.

A punch-bowl of a somewhat different character belongs to the Barbers. It is an oval bowl in shape, much like a shallow soup-tureen, ornamented with strapwork. The handles are formed by female figures; its date, 1730, is later than that of the Monteiths.

The same Company also possesses two Queen Anne punch-ladles; they are of the usual shape; but the bottom of one is formed with a medal, and of the other with a guinea.

For the first time tankards appear amongst silver plate towards the end of the seventeenth century. The Saddlers possess a very fine one, dated 1676, which is ornamented with acanthus leaves, and the Merchant Taylors have one not less beautiful. This is known as the Irish Tankard. It was made in 1680 by the Dublin Guild of Merchant Taylors, and passed into the hands of its present owners when they amalgamated.

The Skinners have a pair of silver tankards, the bowls of which are not circular, but are formed into several straight surfaces with covers, dated 1679, "the gift of Sir Richard Chiverton, Knight and Alderman." The majority of tankards were, of course, made of pewter.

Rather more numerous than the tankards are the flagons, which are of much the same date, and might be described as enlarged tankards, standing more than a foot high, whereas the largest tankards are only about six inches in height. The Skinners possess one of the earliest. It is described as a silver flagon, 1659, and cover, 1678: "The gift of William Russell, Esq., free of the Worshipful Company of Skinners, April 16th, 1679." Another one belonging to the same Company, is dated 1684. The Mercers have two dating from 1718, and the Fishmongers one of the same date. All of these flagons have wide-spreading bases; in each case the body is perfectly plain, except for the arms and inscriptions engraved on it. The lid and handle are very plain and solid. In fact, simplicity and solidity are the striking characteristics of these articles of plate.

The Ironmongers possess a large pewter flagon of the same shape, which was discovered in a shop-window a few years since by a Liveryman of another Company, learned in such matters, who, finding the Ironmongers' arms on the base, presented it to its original possessor. The same Company has the Palmer Flagon, 1724, in its possession; this differs in shape and size from any of the foregoing, and is more akin to the tankard. Its design, a favourite one for reproduction in the present day, consists of a rather squat plain body of large diameter, about seven inches, with plain rounded lid, mounted on feet. The handle is plain and massive, and the thumb-piece for lifting the lid is in the shape of a lion couchant. It is a very solid-looking piece of plate; the design is sometimes described as Scandinavian.

Another article of plate, which became of general use, was the candlestick, or the combination of two or three holders known as the candelabrum. The earliest silver candlesticks date from 1670. The design is generally a stem of large flutes bound together at intervals by bands, and having a wide-spreading foot and a smaller-spreading cap for the holder. This cap was not, however, as in later candlesticks, a copy of an architectural cap. Of course,

candlesticks were in use long before this period; but they do not appear to have been made in silver except for ecclesiastical purposes. Of the few to be found in the possession of the Livery Companies, none are of earlier date than the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The Merchant Taylors and Fishmongers possess some candelabra which are alike in design. The stem is a curiously-fluted Tuscan column, of rather solid proportions; the branches are plain scrolls, with holders at the end. There is a want of harmony in design, between the column—which is so massive, and the branches—which are so light. The column looks as if it were intended to carry something heavy, and not to have merely three serpentine scrolls growing out of the cap.

This sense of incongruity is still more marked in the candlesticks which succeeded the Queen Anne period. These are miniature copies of Corinthian columns, correct in every detail, and are an illustration of how very unsatisfactory it is to copy slavishly architectural details, in miniature, in articles intended for domestic use. The idea of a wax candle growing out of the top of a Corinthian column is quite as absurd as would be a reproduction—let us say—of the Madeleine for a mustard-pot. Just at the end of the Queen Anne period, in 1714, some candelabra were made which belong to the Haberdashers' Company. In these the design is in every way appropriate. The centre stem is not too massive, and is not a reproduction of pure architectural forms; but looks like a candlestick. The branches are in keeping, and are most happily united to the stem. A copy of one of these very fine candelabra is in the South Kensington Museum.

The Skinners have a curious silver snuffer-stand and snuffers of the year 1705, in design rather like a short candlestick, into the bowl of which the snuffers slide.

The Fishmongers have a silver chandelier, dated 1751, very florid in design. The centre is formed of tritons and shell-work, which would be very much better if not quite so heavy; but the period at which it was made was not remarkable for good work. The Goldsmiths are reported to possess a gold chandelier. It was not, however, on view with the rest of their plate, nor is any mention made of it in the bibliography of plate, so that nothing can be said as to its date.

The cups of the eighteenth century are

not very numerous, and are generally of two kinds—urn-shaped, and what may be termed wine-cooler shaped. Both kinds have two handles. Of the two the first is decidedly the more graceful. The silver-gilt Roberts Cup, 1741, exhibited at the Guelph Exhibition—in the catalogue it is erroneously called a gold cup—which belongs to the Merchant Taylors' Company, is a very good specimen. The lower half of the bowl, which is the shape of a Greek vase, is covered with small flutes; the upper half is plain but for the inscription. There is a band of enrichment round the centre. The cover is a high one, surmounted by the crest of the Company. The handles are plain and simple, and bent in graceful curves. Slightly earlier than this is a cup of the other shape, dated 1739. It belongs to the Goldsmiths, and is the work of one of the most famous goldsmiths, Paul Lamerie, who, although a Frenchman, seems to have settled in England. The Goldsmiths possess a ewer made by him in 1741. The vase of this is helmet-shaped. On the lower part of it is a winged mermaid with two tails, accompanied by two boy tritons blowing conches. The foot is ornamented with marine flowers and the Company's badge, the leopard's head. The handle, which is very large, has a very bold half-length figure of a sea god, terminating in foliage. The helmet-shape is of earlier date, for the Fishmongers have one ewer of this kind, dated 1717, which is very much plainer; and another, dated 1758, which is presumably a copy of the earlier one. In the Lamerie Cup of the Goldsmiths, mentioned above, the bowl, which is very large in proportion, is ornamented in the same way as the ewer above described. The handles are formed of half-length female figures, terminating in scroll-work. The cover is shoulder-shaped, and also ornamented. This form of cup was much in vogue towards the latter half of the century, for the Fishmongers have one, dated 1747, known as the Tyrone Cup. It is not so extravagantly decorated as the Lamerie Cup, and the handles are not worked into figures. The Goldsmiths possess two of these cups, dated 1793, and many of the modern cups belonging to the Livery Companies have been made in this style. A very graceful ewer of late date, 1784, belongs to the Ironmongers. It is almost helmet-shaped, but is much more slender than the ewers already mentioned. The lower part of the vase is fluted, the upper portion quite

plain. The handle, which forms a very graceful curve, rises as high as the lips, and then divides into two serpents, the heads of which join on to the back rim of the vase. In style this ewer is very like the Roberts Cup of the Merchant Taylors, and is certainly one of the most beautiful pieces of plate of late date.

The rose-water dishes of this century are mostly of a very ornamental character. Reference has already been made to the Goldsmiths' Queen Anne Plateau, which is a genuine salver. The Fishmongers have two oval dishes of rather small size, with scroll and flower-work in very high relief. The ornament of this period is very florid, a characteristic which was imported from France. A good specimen of this class of dish is seen in the circular silver-gilt one, dated 1737, which was presented to the Skinners' Company by Thomas Moore, Esq., Master, 1819-20, in commemoration of the Coronation of George the Fourth, at which he represented this Company as one of the Twelve Citizens of London, assistant the Chief Butler of England.

A rose-water dish of some historical interest is that known as the Ambassador's salver, which was presented by Sir Paul Pindar—whose interesting old house in Bishopsgate has just been pulled down—to Salisbury, Prime Warden of the Fishmongers' Company in 1765. This dish reverts to the old, plain style, without ornament except inscription. It is very deep, and the fact that a punch-ladle was presented with it, suggests that it may possibly have been used as a punch-bowl.

In this century urns and coffee-pots of silver begin to appear. The Salters have a coffee-pot, dated 1764, which is of a familiar type: the body almost pear-shaped but swelling very much at the bottom, and mounted on feet. The whole is very profusely decorated with flutings and scroll-work. It is almost the only piece of plate met with in the City where the flutings are spiral.

The Barbers' Company has an urn which is a larger edition of the same shape as the coffee-pot just described. It is very ugly and coarse in design, the enrichment consisting only of a wreath of familiar laurel-leaf pattern. A very much better urn of the early part of the present century belongs to the Clothworkers. This is a genuine specimen of the familiar urn shape, with the lower part of the vase fluted.

The Barbers' Company have beautiful teaspoons, dated 1730. The florid pattern

seems more suitable in this case than in articles of a much larger scale, where there is always a great want of repose.

Another table ornament appearing for the first time, is the *épergne* which was the gift of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt to the Mercers' Company, in return for the use of their hall, 1794. This is executed in the pseudo-classical style so familiar to all through the work of Chippendale and Sheraton. The long, attenuated supports and thin festoons are reproduced in silver just as they would have been in wood; or, in plaster, by the brothers Adam. This sudden conversion from the florid patterns of the early Georgian period to the classical severity of the latter part of the century, is said to have been due to the discovery and excavations which took place at Pompeii about the middle of the century.

Amongst the miscellaneous articles of plate are the staff-heads, which nearly all the Companies possess. They are all very much alike, being a solid silver representation of the arms with the supporters. The earliest ones in the possession of the Mercers' Company date from the reign of Charles the Second.

Of the same class are the badges, which were worn by the Barge Masters of the different Companies. Those which are principally remarkable for their large size and weight, are generally oval plates of solid silver, with the Company's arms modelled in relief. Of much smaller size, of finer design, and generally of gold, are the badges worn by the Masters and Wardens of the Companies. They are mostly of modern manufacture, and not remarkable for beauty of design, though there are some which are beautifully enamelled.

Most of the Companies—especially the Goldsmiths—possess a great deal of service plate, such as sauce-boats, mustard-pots, pepper-casters, spoons, forks, and so forth. Some of this is very beautiful, but mostly of a type well known to everybody, and of which reproductions are frequently made in the present day, when the craze for tall pepper-casters has been raging for some time.

Of purely modern plate there is, of course, a large quantity to be found; but such of it as is not a reproduction of old work is very ugly in design, and—especially as regards that manufactured about fifty years ago—remarkable for mere vulgar

weight of metal, or, as a facetious butler put it, for the time it takes to clean. The Goldsmiths have three candelabra of this description, each weighing two thousand ounces.

The Skinners have reproduced, 1871, the famous Norwich rose-water dish, and also the Briot dish from the Clany Museum at Paris. The Clothworkers have an enormous salver of modern design; and many Companies have modern cups which are reproductions of old ones, the most famous of which—the Jubilee Cup presented to the Goldsmiths, by Major Lambert—has been referred to.

It is trusted that this account, necessarily short and probably incomplete, has not been without interest. To those who may wish to see for themselves the different varieties of plate above described, the collection of copies in the South Kensington Museum will be most useful.

ELIZABETHAN DINNERS.

THERE was a good deal of feasting and merry-making in merry England in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth"—a quotation the reader will have met with before, but, never mind, it is apposite enough here. Our splendid Queen—who, as she said of herself, had a man's soul in a woman's body—was Royal in most of her ways, and her dinners were always ordered on a right Royal scale. But she was a true Tudor, and, like her father and grandfather, was always happiest when she was dining out.

I propose to glance at some of her most notable achievements in this direction, which will be viewing the great Queen in a somewhat novel character. Well, for my part, I should have liked well to have attended as a guest the historical dinner on board the "Golden Hind," when she honoured with her presence brave Francis Drake, just home from the circumnavigation of the world. He gave her, we may be sure, a capital dinner, brightened by a sailor's yarns of the strange isles he had visited, the wonderful people he had seen, and the dangers over which he and his gallant fellows had triumphed—and she, in return, gave him the dignity of knighthood, "Rise up, Sir Francis Drake!" It would also have been interesting, to say the least, to have accompanied her on her way to Tilbury, when the dark shadow of Spanish invasion was hovering near the

smiling shores of southern England, and to have dined with her at Sir Nicholas Umfreville's, on roast goose and Burgundy—a good meat and a good wine. The goose was always a favourite dish at the Queen's table, and was well relished by most of her subjects.

Does the reader remember her visit to Sir Julius Cæsar's house, at Mitcham, in fulfilment of a promise which had been five times made and four times broken? "On Tuesday," he writes, in 1598, "she visited my house at Mitcham, and supped and lodged there, and dined the next day. I presented her with a gown of cloth of silver, richly embroidered; a black network mantle, with pure gold; a taffeta hat, white, with several flowers, and a jewel of gold set therein with rubies and diamonds. Her Majesty removed from my house after dinner to Nonsuch, with exceeding good contentment; which entertainment of her Majesty, with the charges of five former disappointments, amounted to £700 sterling, besides mine own provisions, and whatever was sent unto me by my friends." Seven hundred pounds sterling then was equivalent to about five thousand nowadays.

Elizabeth, in her declining years, was a regular visitor at Nonsuch, "which of all other places she liked best." She had purchased it from Lord Lumley, who had often entertained her there; and he had purchased it from the Lord of Arundel, who also had experienced the honour—and cost—of Her Majesty's frequent visits.

It is curious to read of the devices and pastimes which her loyal subjects "got up" for their beloved Queen's amusement. These must have cost much more than "the banquets," however costly. One of the most novel—and least expensive—was the idea of that famous horticulturist, Sir Francis Carew, of Beddington, who grew such "excellent good asparagus," that Lord Dorset sent to beg a dish of it, and who, also, raised the first orange-trees seen in England—from seed given to him, it is said, by Sir Walter Raleigh. His myrtles were also noted. To divert Her Majesty's Grace, he led her, after dinner—it was on August the fifteenth, 1599, that this occurred—to a cherry-tree, "whose fruit he had of purpose kept back from ripening at the least one month after all cherries had taken their farewell of England. This secret he performed," says Sir Hugh Platt, "by straining a tent, or cover of canvas, over the whole tree, and wetting the same now and

then with a scoop, or hose, as the heat of the weather required; and so, by withholding the sunbeams from reflecting upon the berries, they grew both great and were very long before they had gotten their perfect cherry colour; and when he was assured of her Majesty's coming, he removed the tent, and a few sunny days brought them to their full maturity." From the cherry-tree he conducted the aged Queen to a summer-house which he had built for her, on the top of which was painted the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

At Orpington, one Percival Hart, gentleman, built himself a lovely pleasure-house, where he welcomed his Sovereign, in July, 1573. Upon her reception she was first greeted by a nymph, who personated the genius of the mansion; then the scene was shifted, "and from several chambers which, as they were contrived, represented a ship, a sea conflict was offered up to the spectator's view, which so much obliged the eyes of this Princess with the charms of delight, that, upon her departure, she left upon this house—to perpetuate the memory both of the author and artifice—the name and appellation of Bark Hart"—which it is called to this day.

At Wanstead, Elizabeth twice visited the Earl of Leicester. On the first occasion—May, 1578—a dramatic interlude, written by Sir Phillip Sidney, was performed amidst the buds and blooms of the garden—so that pastoral plays are not a Victorian invention.

In 1578, the prince of London merchants, Sir Thomas Gresham, welcomed his Queen to his new house at Osterley with a magnificence which was long talked of. The table was furnished with fish and water-fowl, including swans, from the "fair ponds" which enlivened his "well-wooded park." According to Fuller, the Queen found fault with the court of the house as too large, affirming that "it would appear more handsome if divided with a wall in the middle." Whereupon Sir Thomas sent immediately to London for a company of workmen, who, speedily and silently setting to work, by the morning made "that court double, which the night had left single before."

One must not forget Elizabeth's dinner in the camp at Tilbury, after reviewing the army stationed there to protect the capital against the expected Spanish invasion, and delivering that spirit-stirring speech in which she said :

"I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a King, and of a King of England, too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any Prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm!"

Theobalds, near Cheshunt, was the residence of Elizabeth's great minister, Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley, who began to build it in 1560, and went on enlarging it year after year for the accommodation of his sovereign. She was an annual visitor, always bringing with her a long train of attendants. Sometimes, says a contemporary narrative, she had strangers and ambassadors come to her at Theobalds; "where she hath byn sene in as great royalty, and served as bountifully and magnificently, as at any other time or place, all at his lordship's charge; with rich shows, pleasant devices, and all manner of sports could be devised, to the delight of her Majesty and her whole traine." Each of her visits—and there were twelve of them, beginning in 1564—cost Burghley from two thousand to three thousand pounds, representing in modern money twelve thousand to eighteen thousand pounds.

In August, 1560, she was at Basing, the noble seat of the Marquis of Winchester, Lord Treasurer. She was so well satisfied with his house and his "great cheer," that she laughingly bemoaned his many years; "for else, by my troth," said she, "if my Lord Treasurer were a young man, I would find it in my heart to have him to my husband before any man in England."

In the following year the Borough of Harwich gave her a dinner; and being attended by the magistrates at her departure for some distance beyond the municipal precincts, she graciously inquired if they had any request to make of her; and they replying "Nothing; but to wish your Majesty a good journey," she turned about, and, looking back upon the town, exclaimed, "A pretty town, and wants nothing!"

She was received at Canterbury—in 1573—by the Archbishop, with archiepiscopal splendour. "I met her Highness," writes the Primate, "as she was coming to Dover, upon Folkestone Down. The which I rather did, with all my men, to show my duty to her, and mine affection to the Council, who likewise there met her. And I left her at Dover, and came home to Rokesbourne that night; and

after that, went to Canterbury to receive her Majesty there. Which I did, with the Bishops of Lincoln and Rochester, and my Suffragan, at the West door; where, after the Grammarian had made his Oration to her upon her horseback, she alighted. We then kneeled down, and said the Psalm *Deus misereatur* in English, with certain other collects briefly; and that in our chimers and rochets. After evensong she departed to her lodgings at Saint Austin's, whither I waited upon her. From thence I brought certain of the Council, and divers of the Court to my house to supper, and gave them fourteen or fifteen dishes, furnished with two messes at my long table, whereat sat about twenty. And in the same chamber a third mess, at a separate table, whereat sat ten or twelve; my less hall having three long tables well furnished, with my officers, and with the guard, and others of the Court. Upon Monday it pleased her Majesty to dine in my great hall, thoroughly furnished, with the Council, Frenchmen, Ladies, Gentlemen, and the Mayor of the town, with his Brethren, etc., her Highness sitting in the midst, having two French Ambassadors at one end of the table, and four Ladies of Honour at the other end. And so these was served by her Nobility at waiting, her Gentlemen and Guard bringing her dishes, etc."

Something must be said about that memorable visit to Kenilworth in the summer of 1575, which Scott has reproduced so effectively in his romance. Full accounts of it have been handed down to posterity in Master Laneham's vivacious "Letter," and George Gascoigne's "Princely Pleasures."

The entertainment—probably the most magnificent ever given by a subject to a sovereign—began on Saturday, July the ninth, when Leicester received the Queen at Long Itchington, seven miles from Kenilworth, making her great cheer at dinner, and pleasant pastime in hunting by the way after, so that it was eight o'clock in the evening before the Royal cavalcade arrived at the "first gate" of the Castle. There a Sibyl, clad in white silk, pronounced a proper poem in English rhyme and metre, which was at once a welcome and a panegyric. At the second gate, a Porter, tall of person, big of limb, and stern of countenance, yielded up his club and keys to Her Highness, and bade the trumpeters blare forth a peal of welcome. There were six of them, and

those "harmonious blasters"—the phrase is not mine, but Laneham's—accompanied the gay procession across the tilt-yard to the inner gate, where it was received by the Lady of the Lake, with two attendant nymphs, all arrayed in silk, from a moveable island, blazing bright with torches, in the middle of the pool. Then came more poetry; and to the tune of haut-bois, shawms, cornets, and similar Biblical instruments, the Queen and her train passed over a bridge, seventy feet long, the pillars of which were ornamented with the symbolical produce of Sylvanus, Ceres, Pomona, Bacchus, Neptune, Mars, and Phœbus Apollo, into the inner court, where, alighting from her palfrey, she was conducted to her chamber. Then the great guns roared, and the fireworks glowed and crackled, as if Jupiter desired to show himself "no further behind with his welcome than the rest of his Gods; and that would he have all the country to know; for indeed, the noise and flame were heard and seen a twenty miles off."

Sunday morning was given to divine worship; Sunday afternoon to music and dancing; the evening to another "pyrotechnical" display.

There was hunting on Monday evening, and by torchlight, as Her Majesty returned, a wild man (Hombre Salvagio) made his appearance and uttered a number of courtly compliments, in strange contrast to his assumed savagery of character. There was hunting on Wednesday, and bear-baiting on Thursday. The second Sunday was devoutly kept, closing up with a solemn Bride-ale—"solemn," Master Laneham calls it, though a good deal of grotesque mummery was introduced—and a display by the "men of Coventry" of their Hock-tide sports, in which figured the Captain Cox celebrated by Ben Jonson, in his "Masque of Owls." There was more hunting upon the Monday, and an aquatic display on the lake, wherein Neptune, the Lady of the Lake, tritons, mermaids, Arion and his dolphin, all played their parts, and poured out upon the Queen the profusest imaginable flatteries.

In reference to this spectacle, a contemporary collector of "Merry Passages and Jest" records that "Harry Goldingham was to represent Arion upon the dolphin's back, but, finding his voice to be very hoarse and unpleasant, when he was to perform it, he tears off his disguise and swears he was none of Arion, not he, but even honest Harry Goldingham, which

blunt discovery pleased the Queen better than if it had gone through in the right way; yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceeding well."

On Tuesday, the Coventry men repeated their performance. And thus every day brought Her Majesty some form of entertainment—the whole being so much to her gratification, that she prolonged her sojourn at Kenilworth over nineteen days, not taking her departure until Wednesday, July the twenty-seventh. The cost of this visit was enormous, and made a great breach in Leicester's fortune. Laneham notes that in three days seventy-two tons of ale and beer were drunk, and the Earl's cellar was well-nigh empty, when his friends and neighbours came to his assistance with "a relief of 40 tons till a new supply was gotten again; and then to our drinking afresh as fast as ever we did."

Laneham gives no particulars of the dinners served up at Elizabeth's table during her stay; but we cannot doubt that they were on the same sumptuous scale as any other part of the protracted revel. We are able, however, from "The Queenes Majesty's Booke," in the Harleian MSS., No. 609, to put upon record the fare which was supplied to her under her own roof. Here is a Sunday dinner:

1st Course. Cheat and mancheat (white wheaten bread); beer and ale, seven gallons; and wine, 1s. 1p. Boiled mutton, two stone; boiled capon, one; boiled chickens, four; boiled larks, eighteen; boiled partridges, two; boiled beef, half a sirloin; cygnet; capons, two; veal, six stone; roast beef, one stone; cocks, seven; chickens, nine; plovers, nine; veal pies, and custard, one.

2nd Course. Larks, two dozen; snipes, nine; partridges, three; pheasants, two; conies, six; pullets, two; chicken-pie, tart, fritter; butter, fourteen pounds; and eggs, seventy-five.

The cost is put at four pounds and sixpence.

On a "Fish Day" the Royal table was thus provided:

Cheat and mancheat, eight loaves; beer and ale, seven gallons; and wine, 1s. 2d.

1st Course. Ling, 1; collops and eggs, 1s.; whittings, twelve; salmon, p. (dnl.); pike, one; gurnards, two; dory, one; birte, dim.; soles, 1 p.; salmon calves, 1s.; lamperne pie, one; custard, one.

2nd Course. Eels and lamperns, 1s.; carp, one; tench, one; smelts, fifty; flounders and loches, twenty; cray, seven dozen; warden pie, one; tart, one; veal,

boiled, 2a. ; capon, b., one ; chickens, b., four ; larks, b., two dozen ; mutton, b., two st. ; veal, roast, two st. ; capon, one ; pullet, one ; chickens, nine ; larks, eighteen ; snytes, six ; plovers, six ; cocks, five ; teals, four ; partridges, two ; coney, six ; panned-capon, one ; butter, fourteen pounds ; and eggs, twenty-five.

After presiding for awhile at her public table, the Queen usually retired to her own apartment to dine in quiet.

Among the articles of diet not included in the foregoing bills of fare, I find, on other occasions, bream, perch, and conger-eels, trout, haddock, and plaice.

In 1577, Elizabeth was magnificently entertained at Gorhambury by the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, father of the "sage-browed Verulam," pioneer of the Inductive Philosophy. It was here that his Royal mistress said, "You have made your house too little for your lordship," and that he aptly replied, "No, madam ; but your Highness has made me too big for the house."

He took the hint, however, and enlarged it by building a couple of wings. The Queen stayed six days, at a daily cost to the Lord Keeper of about one hundred pounds—or six hundred pounds at the present value of money—a heavy price to pay for the honour of a Royal visit, and due to the numerous retainers she always carried with her. In the course of these six days eight oxen were consumed, sixty sheep, eighteen calves, thirty-four lambs, and as many kids as cost fifty shillings. Poultry and game: Two hundred and six capons of all kinds, as many pullets as cost twenty-one shillings, thirty-one dozen and eight chickens, ten dozen geese, twelve dozen and eight herons, eight dozen and ten bitterns, twelve dozen ducklings, nineteen dozen and seven pigeons, eighteen dozen and seven "birds of the West," two dozen godwits, fourteen dotterels, thirteen shovellers, two dozen and five pheasants, fourteen partridges, sixteen dozen and nine quails, seventeen dozen May-chicks, twenty-three mallards, twelve teal, three dozen and nine larks, three curlews, and one dozen knots. Several of these dishes have been banished from our current menus.

Sea fish and fresh-water fish of all kinds.

Gammons of bacon, baked and boiled ; twenty-four dried tongues ; twenty-six pigs, two fitches of bacon, neats' tongues, sheep's tongues, cows' udders, calves' feet,

hares, sixty-one dozen and nine rabbits, with butter, eggs, cream, and milk.

Also, spicery and confectionery necessaries (bread !), vinegar and verjuice, herbs, flowers, and artichokes.

Also, twenty-five bucks and two stags.

It must be owned that Sir Nicholas Bacon catered in a large and liberal spirit.

In 1578 Elizabeth visited Sir William Drury, at Lanshall Hall, near Bury, who gave her "a costly and delicate dinner." Of her progress to Norwich, in the same year, the poet Churchyard has written :

"When the Queenes Highnesse came to Norwich, the substance of the whole triumph and feasting was in a manner there new to beginne, for order was taken there that every day, for sixe dayes together, a shew of some strange device should be seene ; and the Maior and Aldermen appointed among themselves and their brethren, that no one person, reteyning to the Queene, should be unfeasted or unbidden to dinner and supper, during the space of those sixe dayes : which order was well and wisely observed, and gained their Citie more fame and credit than they wot of : for that courtesie of theirs shall remayne in perpetual memorie, whiles the wallis of their Citie standeth."

In 1581 the Duke of Anjou appeared at Elizabeth's Court as a suitor for her hand ; and there were banquets, triumphs, pageants, and various other devices in his honour. His suit proved unavailing, and the Duke, like a less distinguished person, went back again, the Queen accompanying him as far as Canterbury. At Sittingbourne they both dined together, where "the Queen was served, after the English manner, by the greatest ladies of her Court ; and the Monsieur, after the French manner, by the Gentlemen of his traine ; ye which ladies and gentlemen dined afterwards together."

I must be content with only two or three more references to Her Highness's dinners. In 1595 she dined with Sir John Puckering, at Kew. The entertainment for that meal was great and costly. At her first alighting she was presented with a fine fan, its handle garnished with diamonds. When she was in the middle way between the garden gate and the house, there came running towards her one with a nosegay in his hand, and delivered it unto her with a short well-penned Speech ; it had in it a very rich jewel, with pendants of "unfired" diamonds, valued at four

hundred pounds at least. After dinner, in her Privy Chamber, her host gave her a fair pair of virginals; in her bed-chamber, a fine gown and a jupon, which things were pleasing to Her Highness; and to grace her host the more—and display her harpy-like rapacity—she of herself took from him a silver-gilt salt-cellar, a spoon, and a fork of fair agate.

In 1600 the Queen was at Blackfriars, to witness the marriage of Lord Herbert with Mistress Anne Russell. The bride met her at the water-side, where my Lord Cobham had provided a "lectica," made like a litter; and in this she was carried to Lady Russell's by six knights. Her Majesty dined there, and at night went through the house of Dr. Puddin, who gave her a fan, to my Lord Cobham's, where she supped. After supper the masks came in, and delicate it was to see eight ladies so richly and prettily attired; Mrs. Felton leading; and after they had done all their own ceremonies, these eight ladies makers chose eight ladies more to dance the measure. Mrs. Felton went to the Queen and wooed her to dance. Her Majesty asked what she was.

"Affection," she said.

"Affection," said the Queen, "is false." Then her Majesty rose and danced.

This lively old lady, who went out so briskly dining and dancing, was then in her sixty-eighth year.

The last occasion that she "dined out" seems to have been in January, 1603, when she was entertained and feasted by Lord Thomas Howard at the Charterhouse. On March the twenty-fourth she died.

So far as the diet of the commonalty was concerned, a great change came over its materials in the reign of Elizabeth. Under the Plantagenets their bills of fare had mainly consisted of fish, white meat, eggs and milk, bacon, vegetables, and bread. The chief drinks had been grain-beer and cider, while the upper orders and their retainers had "quaffed" French wines, or Rhenish. But about the middle of the sixteenth century bacon and fish went out of vogue, vegetables grew dear and scarce, game and poultry became luxuries. The people lived upon salt beef, or roast and inferior mutton, with bad meal; and as strong liquor was needed to reconcile the stomach to viands so coarse and cold, they took to drinking strong ales—the brewing of which they had learned from the Flemings—strong ales, flavoured with stimulant spices, and potent,

fiery wines, imported from Spain or Italy. "The vintage," says Mr. Hall, "that had cooled the heat of the real conquerors of France was not proving strong enough for their descendants, who sat as the models of Bardolph and Pistol; and the flagon emptied at Chaucer's tabard appeared but thin potations to Mistress Quickly's guests in East Cheap. In truth, their canary was 'a marvellous searching wine.'"

Mr. Hall, whom I have just quoted, shows us Will Darrill, of Littlecote, the hero of the fine ballad of "The Friar of Orders Grey," a visitor to London, about the time of the Armada, and a resident in Warwick Lane. Thither, week after week, were sent to him from Littlecote nearly all the delicacies of the county. Baskets of fresh-caught trout from his own streams, and of pheasants, partridges, and other fowl, from his own preserves and poultry-yard; pigeon-pies, from his own dove-cotes; besides venison, rabbits, chickens, green geese, and capons. Strawberries for his dessert were despatched to him from his own garden by Cornelius, his Dutch gardener. Beneath such good cheer as this, supplemented by purchased viands of every description, with light wines and ale—or perhaps sack, softened with oranges, sugar, and milk—did Darrill's "table-bordes" groan twice a day during his first visit to London! From papers which have been preserved, we are able to trace his menus for several weeks, and to estimate their cost. Thus, one Sunday, the dinner consists of "A pece of bief, xvjd. For rostinge a side of venison and sawce, xd, ij. chickens and bacon, ijs. A quart of claret, vid. For bolling the chickens and bacon, and for parsley, iiijd. = 5s." On a Thursday: "A neck of veale, xiiijd.; a leg of mutton, xvijjd.; Bief, xvijjd. For rostinge ij. peces of ij. neckes of veale, iiijd. For dressinge veale and bacon, and rostinge the leg of mutton and sawce, xjd. For grene sawce, iijd. = 5s. 8d." On a Wednesday: "A pece of bief, xvijjd.; 2 playces, xijd.; Conger, viijjd.; Cockles, iiijjd.; Mackerell, viijjd.; a pound of butter, iiijjd.; a pint of white wine and lemon and sugar, vjd.; 2 chickens, xvjd. For rostinge ye chickens and dressinge ye fishe, xijd. = 7s. 4d." On other occasions the bill of fare consists of: A piece of beef, a shoulder of lamb, a loin of veal, and a pullet; or, a loin of veal, two chickens, two rabbits, with sops and sauce, and a quart of claret; or, a loin of veal, a piece of beef, oranges, a pint of strawberries, bread, beer, and a quart of claret; or, a piece of

beef, a loin of veal, two chickens, a quart of claret, bread, beer, and a quart of strawberries; or, a piece of beef, a leg of mutton, a loin of veal, two pecks of peas, three rabbits, a quart of cream, three quarts of strawberries, two pounds of cherries, half a pound of musk comfits, and the same quantity of violet comfits, oranges, two lemons, bread, and beer. This last was an expensive dinner, costing fourteen shillings and elevenpence, or nearly five pounds at the present rate of currency. Probably the guests were more numerous than on other occasions, and from the quantity of fruit we may infer that some were ladies.

One can never sufficiently regret that there was no Boswell to record the conversation—the wit-combats and the wise, humane talk—between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson when they dined together at the “Mermaid” or the “Boar’s Head”; no reporter to preserve to posterity something of the poetic interchanges between Sidney and Spenser at Penhurst, or Spenser and Raleigh on the banks of Mulla. One would have liked, too, to have known Shakespeare’s favourite dish, and Spenser’s—to have seen the bill of fare provided for any of their divine symposia. No doubt, as Sidney says in “The Arcadia,” “though not with unwise costliness, yet with cleanly sufficiency” would the table always be supplied. Maybe with some such array of edibles as Justice Shallow, in the Second Part of “Henry IV.,” would have “William cook” prepare for Sir John Falstaff: “Some pigeons, a couple of short-legged hens, a joint of mutton, and any pretty little, tiny kickshaws.” Master Page, in the “Merry Wives of Windsor,” invites his friends to dine with him on “a hot venison pasty”; and there is reason to believe that Shakespeare, like Robin Hood and his merry men, was not indifferent to a fat buck or a tender doe. In one of his

comedies, Dekker represents a certain Crambo as ordering for dinner “no great cheer, but a couple of capons, some pheasants, plovers, an’ orangeade pie.” The last-named item I take to have been one of Dekker’s weaknesses; as John Fletcher’s (if Shadwell may be credited) was “a fat loin of pork,” and Ben Jonson’s a pint (or more) of Canary.

In a pleasantly written but almost forgotten novel, “The Youth of Shakespeare,” the writer introduces a description of the dinner given by Dame Shakespeare in honour of the christening of her son, which, as we have no more authentic narrative, I may put before the reader:

“One or two decent, motherly dames were in the kitchen, bustling to and fro, looking to the dinner, for which a huge fire, covered with pots and kettles, and having a famous large joint on the spit, showed some preparation, the whilst a stout wench, evidently in her best finery, along with Humphrey in his Sunday jerkin, kept hurrying in and out, laden with knives, napery, drinking vessels, trenchers, and other needful things at a feasting. . . . After Sir Nathaniel had said grace, the company sat down to a dinner that would have gladdened any but to have beheld; for there was brought upon the table a famous store of all things in season, with plenty of excellent liquor, both ale and cider; and all set to with good appetites. . . . After the meal was over, the dishes were removed, and in their stead the tables were covered with a plentiful variety of cakes, such fruit as could be got, marchpane, apples, and comfits, stewed prunes, and dishes of other preserves, syllabubs for the younger folks, made of new milk and verjuice, and wine for the elders of two or three several kinds; besides which John Shakespeare was brewing a goodly bowl of sack with sugar in it, for such as affected such delicate drink.”

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CROSS CURRENTS.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT a voice!"

"How graceful!"

"What wonderful eyes! My dear, they'll make her fortune!"

From all parts of the room such comments came, in tones more or less audible, more or less sincere.

"She's too thin!"

"All that excitement is out of place in a room like this."

"Where did the Tyrrells pick her up?"

There were about a hundred people in the rooms, all well-dressed, all having the unmistakable hall-mark of "society," all stirred, as such an assemblage is not often stirred, by one common interest. It was about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, and the warm May sunshine, as it shone in upon them, was subdued and chastened by delicate Indian draperies. These had evidently been chosen with the most careful reference to the papering on the wall, and the tinting of the ceiling, which was all, or almost all, that could be seen of the room at the moment. The other inanimate details—equally harmonious when they were visible—were now obscured by groups of men and women, groups which shifted and changed, combined and dispersed like the pattern of a kaleidoscope as people met one another, exchanged remarks and comments—mainly

on one topic—and passed on in the same instant, as though the great object to be attained by each individual was the exchange of three words with every one in the room in turn. The air was sweet, if a little close and heavy, with the scent of quantities of flowers. Every one was interested, eager, at his or her best. John Tyrrell, the master of the house, was an actor, successful and fashionable; he and his sister gave only one "at home" in the course of the season, and they were by no means indiscriminate in their choice of acquaintances—to be seen at their house stamped an individual as "somebody," if somebody only in the world of fashion; and with that curious homage to intellect, which is as much an instinct of humanity as it is a social phrase, the shallowest titled or monied nonentity who crossed the Tyrrells' threshold felt vaguely that something was expected of him or her, and endeavoured, more or less impotently, according to their kind, to respond to the demand.

"Selma Malet!"

The name seemed to be in the very air, so many people were asking the same question and receiving the same answer.

"Miss Selma Malet!"

It was echoed by an old lady sitting at the end of the room with some disfavour.

"Selma!" she repeated, "ah, she's not an English girl. I thought not. What countrywoman is she, I wonder? These geniuses are generally Poles or Russians."

She was a tall old lady, plain in countenance, and, as compared with nearly every other woman in the room, shabby in dress; except for her height, which was commanding, her nose, which was aquiline, and her manner, which was slightly supercilious, she was as unlike the typical duchess

as a woman could be. But a duchess she was, nevertheless, and the well-preserved, elderly man to whom she spoke, a rather distinguished art critic, responded with due alacrity.

"She is a Greek," he said, with the air of one who knows, though he would have been much puzzled to quote his authority; "that is to say her mother was a Greek—a very beautiful woman with a terrific temper. She stabbed her husband in a fit of jealousy, and then died of remorse; quite a girl she was, about two-and-twenty."

"Dear me!" ejaculated his auditor, with a general air of disapprobation of such ill-regulated proceedings, combined with a desire for further details. "This young woman takes after her mother, no doubt. It is to be hoped she will control herself better. Where has she been brought up? Ah," she went on, "here is Miss Tyrrell. She will tell us all about Miss 'Selma Malet.'"

A woman of five or six-and-forty—the only woman visible wearing neither hat nor bonnet—detached herself suavely from the group with which she had been talking as the Duchess spoke, and came towards her. She was beautifully and elaborately dressed, and her whole personality, from her wonderful auburn hair to her graceful manner, was a triumph of artistic arrangement. She was not beautiful, not even pretty; but her sallow face and light eyes seemed as essential to the completion of her whole effect as the admirably chosen colours of her gown. She was too thin for grace, but she never made a movement which did not harmonise with everything about her.

"I have been on my way to you really for ages," she said, sweetly, with that mixture of deference to rank and consciousness of the immeasurable superiority conferred on her by her connection with art, which was one of the secrets of Miss Tyrrell's success with society. "Did I hear you speaking of Miss Malet? I hope you were pleased?"

Whatever her private opinion might have been, the Duchess would have been a bold and self-confident woman indeed if she had ventured to confess to such bad taste as the tone in which the question was asked imputed to any one who might reply in the negative.

"Delighted!" she replied, promptly; "quite charmed, I assure you. Mr. Marsden," referring to the man who still

stood by, "Mr. Marsden has been telling me her story. Most romantic, really."

Miss Tyrrell turned to Mr. Marsden with her most artistic smile.

"Which is your version?" she said. "There is the Irish peasant version, the Italian princess version, the Greek version, and—poor Selma—of course, the barmaid version. Which is yours?"

The late authoritative biographer glanced from the expectant Duchess to his hostess with an expression which was the reverse of amiable.

"I'm afraid I must confess to what you call the Greek version," he said, with a forced laugh. "Have I really been misinformed?"

"Everybody seems to have been misinformed," said Miss Tyrrell, lightly; "it is impossible to say how it has happened." Miss Tyrrell was perhaps hardly speaking the unvarnished truth when she said these words.

"The facts are really ridiculously simple," she continued. "Selma Malet is an English girl, and a lady, neither in the depths of poverty nor rolling in riches. Her father was a man of quiet literary tastes, and one of my brother's oldest friends. Her mother was without characteristics of any kind, and died a natural death, about two years ago. Her father died—also a natural and uninteresting death—about three months later. All the interest attached to Selma Malet centres in herself alone. My brother expects great things of her. I hope you agree with him, Mr. Marsden?"

"Dear me," ejaculated the Duchess once more, and alluding to the very simple story Miss Tyrrell had told. "Really; is that all? Well, one would never think it from her—her appearance, and—and her—manner. Dear me!"

Miss Tyrrell smiled.

"It might be better for her," she said, "if one of these romantic stories did belong to her; there is so much attraction to some people about a romance. But I don't know, after all, that we have not been just a little over-done with Russians, and Swedes, and barmaids, and Countesses. Such a beautiful artistic feeling as Selma Malet's seems to me the more interesting, when it develops itself in such an unexpected quarter. A young English lady and an artist are curiously incompatible terms!"

"Do you believe her to have great things in her, Miss Tyrrell? I have only heard her once, remember."

Miss Tyrrell turned and laid a long, thin hand emphatically on the speaker's arm.

"Mr. Marsden," she said, "I believe her to be a genius. She has a feeling and an enthusiasm for the artistic, which I have never seen equalled. She absolutely lives for her art alone, and I have very little doubt that her artistic career will be positively triumphant. I shall be much surprised if she is not the sensation of next season. What delicacy, what force, what resource she has already!"

"Very true!" responded the gentleman thus harangued. His tone was somewhat absent, and his cogitations resulted, a moment later, in his saying, in a tone he had not yet used, a tone of serious, business-like interest: "Will Miss Malet recite again, or has she gone? I've not seen her about the room. Will you introduce me?"

"Oh, I do hope we may hear her again," added the Duchess, with quite new enthusiasm; "do bring her here, and let me make her acquaintance, my dear Miss Tyrrell."

Miss Tyrrell looked round the room.

"I hardly know whether she will recite again," she said, "she is very nervous and sensitive. I do not see her at this moment. But I will speak to my brother."

"There he is," returned the Duchess, "talking to those American girls. Mr. Tyrrell is never lost in a crowd."

The Duchess was right. There were men in the room taller, many men louder in talk and more lavish in gesture than their host; but there was that about John Tyrrell which seemed to act like a magnet on the consciousness of every one near him. He was a man of about three-and-forty, hardly above the average height, but admirably proportioned, and with a quiet unobtrusive grace of movement and gesture which is seldom seen in a man, except as the result of careful stage training. His face and head were very striking. Twenty years earlier, London—particularly feminine London—had raved about his beauty; his wonderful eyes, his perfect features, his admirable colouring had taken the public by storm. Behind all this physical perfection there had chanced to be a powerful and active brain, and everything that time had taken from him was more than compensated by the added strength, dignity, and intellectuality which it had brought. The smooth-shaven, perfectly-moulded mouth and chin—though there were people who said that John Tyrrell's

mouth was his worst point—were far stronger, and more striking in the man of three-and-forty, than they had been in the youth of three-and-twenty, the dark expressive eyes were no less attractive for the lines of thought which marked the forehead above them. The boy's manner had been fascinating; the man's manner was irresistible.

His sister threaded her way through the crowd, and touched him lightly on the arm.

"Come and speak to the Duchess," she said; "she is anxious to hear Selma again. Where is she?"

John Tyrrell laughed.

"Down in the tea-room being improved by Lady Dunstan," he said. "Where is the Duchess?"

The voice was the only one of the younger John Tyrrell's good points to which time had not been kind. Great as was the effect he could still produce with it on the stage, in familiar conversation, when he was at no special pains to control it, it was occasionally harder than he was in the least aware of.

He crossed the room with his sister, stayed for a few minutes talking to the Duchess, and then he left the room. As he disappeared, one of those curious magnetic currents by which such assemblages are sometimes touched, ran through the room, and everybody informed everybody else that Miss Selma Malet was going to recite again. There was a subdued murmur of expectancy, an eager, interested re-arrangement of groups, and then a sudden silence and stillness.

There was a curious, curved platform at one end of the room which had been designed by Miss Tyrrell for such occasions as the present. Two or three white leather chairs, shaped in imitation of the Greeks' stone seats, were placed upon it, several tall palms stood about, and the piano was rendered as Grecian as circumstances would allow by a leopard skin which was thrown across it. In the midst of these artistic incongruities, facing the fashionable, curious crowd, as the hush fell upon it, there stood a tall, girlish figure in a green gown. She paused a moment, motionless, every line of her simple, unconscious pose absolutely graceful with the natural grace of perfectly proportioned youth; and then her eyes, which had been a little shy, and even frightened, as they rested on the rows of faces before her, darkened and deepened, as she looked away into space,

the hot colour which had rushed to her cheeks in that moment of embarrassment, faded, and, with her lovely lips whitening moment by moment with the force of the passion her imagination created in her, she began to recite.

Her voice, low and intense as she began, rose and thrilled with emotion. The people before her were nothing to her, the occasion, the interest she excited were nothing to her, her very individuality was swept from her in her intense realisation of the burning lines she uttered. Her beautiful, sensitive face, quiveringly responsive to every shade of emotion, her delicate, expressive voice, and slight, graceful gesture seemed to be the natural and inevitable handmaidens of the genius within her—handmaidens of which she was utterly unconscious. She was utterly unconscious, also, of the charm they possessed for those who could have been touched by nothing deeper. Even in that well-dressed crowd there were two or three on whom the power in her laid an irresistible spell; but against the majority—never in favour of deep emotion—the passionate feeling beat itself in vain. Selma Malet was very beautiful, and very graceful; she was also John Tyrrell's protégée, and she was to be the sensation of next season; in all these capacities she was interesting, and the rows of curious, admiring faces remained curious and admiring to the end. But of the striving, consuming genius so near them, and so infinitely distant, they had no conception. Society can appraise talents, it worships success; genius in embryo it ignores or distrusts.

The broken, despairing voice ceased, the quivering face relaxed, the far-away gaze died out of the great, dark eyes, and Selma Malet moved hurriedly off the platform as the room filled with the sound of the polite applause which is all such an audience has to bestow. There was no one known to her near her as she came down into the room, and the girl was making rapidly and instinctively for the door, when a hand was laid upon her arm. She raised her eyes with a violent start; they were full of tears, and she was trembling from head to foot.

"Please let me go now," she murmured.

"One moment, Selma," returned John Tyrrell, "Mrs. Norman wishes to be introduced to you."

"Oh, please——"

But the girl broke off. A very old lady

with white hair, and eyes from which no years could steal the beauty, was standing close beside her.

"My dear," she said, kindly, taking the cold, shaking hand in both her own, "I will not keep you. I loved and worked at the art you have chosen for very many years before you were born, and I want to tell you what pleasure you have given me."

"I did so badly," faltered the girl.

Her voice, with the passion gone from it, was very musical and youthful.

"Yes, in one sense you did badly. You are very young, and your power is very great. It will take many years of hard work before you can do it justice."

All consciousness of herself and her surroundings seemed to fall away from Selma. She looked straight into the fine old face, without attempting to withdraw her hand, which trembled no longer.

"I know," she said, simply. "I mean to work."

"If you work, if your ambition is worthy of your genius, and your life is worthy of both, I think you will be the finest actress of your age. My dear, be true to yourself. Good-bye."

With a sudden impulse, strange and pretty to see in any one so old, the greatest actress of a generation past bent forward and kissed the girl on the forehead.

An hour later John Tyrrell, having seen the last of his guests depart, turned to his sister, who was sinking into the nearest seat with a sigh of relief.

"Very well done indeed, Sybilla," he said. "Flowers admirable, as usual, and the tea and things capitally managed. Did every one come?"

"I think so," answered his sister, languidly; "every one except Lady Fanshawe. I am glad you are satisfied."

"I really don't know why we asked Lady Fanshawe," returned her brother. "She's no use. Where is Selma?"

Miss Tyrrell looked round the room.

"I've no notion," she said. "I told her we would send her home. John, I think—though it is very touching to see the dear child so carried away—I really think she should try to be a little less—less—entêtée. I could hardly introduce her at all; and she seems to have nothing to say. An artist, even such a young one, should at least be able to talk of her art. She hardly understands the obligations of her position as yet. She might have made a far deeper impression this afternoon than

she has done, I'm afraid; and first impressions are so important to a young artist."

John Tyrrell looked at his sister with the faintest possible curl of the lip.

"I don't agree with you," he said. "She could hardly have done better if she had known what she was doing. You need not distress yourself, Sybilla; it won't last long, this absorption of hers. One season will make her all you could wish. By Jove! What a position she will have!"

He turned as he spoke, carelessly enough, and went out of the room, downstairs, and opened a door at the end of a long passage, leading into a small room, from which the fast-fading daylight had nearly departed.

It was difficult to say, at first sight, what there was about the room which gave an instantaneous impression that it belonged to a man. There were about it none of the usual characteristics. It was not untidy, nor was it bare; on the contrary, it was carefully fitted up with old oak; all the appointments were as tasteful as in a woman's sitting-room, the pictures on the walls—principally proof-engravings of famous pictures, with the artist's inscription to John Tyrrell—would have been quite as good company for an actress as for an actor. The only detail in the room which could by no possibility be connected with a woman was the writing-table, and that one feature stamped the whole room at once as the workshop of a practical man.

It seemed to its owner at first that the room was empty, and he paused on the threshold, with his hand on the lock.

"Selma!" he said.

There was a slight movement near the window, and Selma Malet, who was sitting in a great oak chair, hidden from him by its high, wide back, as she looked out at the evening sky, looked round to him.

"I am here," she said, softly, and there was a little tremble in her voice.

John Tyrrell shut the door, and, crossing the room, rested his arms on the back of the chair in which she sat.

"What are you doing here?" he said.

Selma rested her elbow on the arm of the chair, and leant her cheek on her hand.

"I—I wanted to think," she said. "I always think best in this room; I've learnt so much here. I'm afraid I must be stupid—really very stupid, you know."

"Why?"

"Because I do that thing so badly—oh, so badly. It seems as if all your help and teaching were of no use. I—I do try."

The low, girlish voice broke suspiciously, and the man looked down on her in silence for a moment, with a curve of his mouth which was half pity, half cynicism.

"Look up at me, Selma," he said. He waited until the girl turned her head and raised her eyes with a little, deprecating smile at the tears that filled them, and then he said: "You did not do badly. I have never heard you do better; and you pleased me very much."

A rush of bright colour swept over the sensitive, upturned face, and the eyes danced as the tears fell from them.

"Really? Really?" she cried, with an impulsive clasp of her hands on the arm of the chair. "Oh, if you are satisfied with me, I am happy always, because I know you know."

For one moment, as he met those almost worshipping young eyes, his own were touched with an indefinable expression which curiously suggested regret.

"Yes," he said, slowly, "yes, I do—know."

"And you really think—you're not vexed?—you really think I—can?"

The look, whatever it had meant, from whatever source it had sprung, disappeared from John Tyrrell's face. This ordinary expression was even accentuated, and his voice was perhaps harder than usual as he answered:

"I know you can. If you do as I tell you, you shall!" He paused a moment, and then he asked, with a keen look at her: "You've not told me how you've enjoyed the afternoon?"

"The afternoon?" echoed Selma, vaguely. "Oh—the people! Well, I was so vexed with myself that I didn't think much. But now I do think about it—it sounds horribly rude—I'm afraid I haven't enjoyed it at all. Oh, Mrs. Norman was nice;" and the ready colour came into her cheeks again. "I love her! What did she mean, I wonder? Of course one means to work. And you really were pleased," she repeated, as she rose and stretched out her hands to him, impulsively. "Oh, I am the happiest girl in London. Now I must fly home, Helen will think I'm lost. I wish she could have come; she was so disappointed."

She looked, indeed, radiantly happy, as

she "flew," as she expressed it, upstairs to say good-bye to Miss Tyrrell, as she "flew" into a cab, and out again into a small house in Hampstead.

"Is Miss Helen in?" she asked the servant who opened the door. "Where is she? No, I won't have tea, thanks," and she ran lightly upstairs. "Helen!" she called; "Nell, Nell!"

A door on the landing above opened quickly, and another girl's voice, very like her own, but rather older and less exquisitely modulated, answered eagerly:

"I'm here, dear; come along;" and a short, bright-looking girl appeared at the top of the stairs.

Selma rushed up to her, and kissed her impetuously.

"I'm late," she said; "have you been in long, Nellie?"

"Not long," returned her sister. "Well, have you enjoyed it?"

"I'm in the seventh heaven," answered Selma. "Mr. Tyrrell was very pleased; really, very pleased, you know. I was very miserable. I thought I had done disgracefully. No, Nell, it isn't nonsense. You don't know how stupid I am; and then he was so nice. So I know it can't have been as bad as I thought, and I don't know what to do for joy."

They had passed into the drawing-room by this time, and Selma had gently pushed her sister into a chair, and was kneeling at her feet and looking into her face with shining, excited eyes. Quite suddenly she drew back a little, and her face changed.

"Helen!" she said, quickly. "Dear, has—has anything happened?"

Helen's face was flushed and trembling as she looked into the happy, eager face before her; and there was a look in her eyes which Selma had never seen there before.

"What is it, darling! What is it?" she repeated, softly, kissing the hands she held in both her own.

Her sister suddenly drew her very close and pressed her cheek against the dark, wavy hair.

"Humphrey," she whispered; "Humphrey. Selma, I am going to be his wife, dear."

With a little low cry of wonder and delight, Selma flung her arms impulsively round her sister's neck, and they clung together without a word in an embrace which was very close and very tender.

GRIZZLY DAN.

A COMPLETE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

A SHORT, slim, wiry, silent, strange man was Dan. A man who seemed out of place in Salt Flat, or, for the matter of that, out of place in any Western mining camp, at all. He could shoot, lie, or drink with any man in the camp; but his ways were not their ways. He never forced a quarrel, or cheated his friends—at least, not openly—and he was never known to be drunk. Lastly, he went about, not only in his own hat and coat—it was the custom in Salt Flat for these articles to change hands, whether at a bargain or otherwise, pretty often—but by his own name. This was looked upon by the rest of us almost as an insult. There was hardly a man among us there who hadn't some very good reason to keep his real name as much as possible in the background. Joe Carr, the bar tender—whose real name was Joe Palmer—was universally accounted one of our foremost citizens, and an excellent fellow—as we went—but his best friend would have fought shy indeed of addressing him as Palmer. I had heard him called many names, some of which would have given ground for libel actions in England ten times over; nay, I have myself called him thief—with a prefix—and he did not seem much hurt; but never that. So it was a sore point with us all that Grizzly Dan should thus insinuate a superiority that none of us would allow.

"He mought ha' tacked on another name," said Frank Menner, our butcher, "from back East," as he was careful to inform us on every possible occasion, "when he come here, if it was only to be sociable. You say old Jim at the saw-mill knew his father down in Missouri, and his name was Hunter there, too. Wal, maybe so, maybe so," he added, reflectively; "but he arn't the only good man among us, not even the best by a long way; likely he find so some day. We didn't go much on 'sass' back East, and there was generally some one put the kabosh* on it before long."

I think, though, Menner must have been the only one of us that actually bore Dan enmity. The quiet and soberness of the man angered us at times—when we fell more than usually below his level—as much as this

* Put the kabosh, that is, put a summary stop to it.

very "nominal" matter ever did; but we most of us liked him individually. He was always welcome, and always ready, too, to play in a table of suchre or "all-fours," though he seldom played high and always on the square, and if it had not been for public opinion he would have had more than one opportunity of going partners with men who worked the more paying claims higher up the gulch. As it was, he seemed well enough content. He worked his one claim alone, and though it paid little or nothing, he never borrowed or ran up bills.

He had not been among us long before there came to Salt Flat a party—husband, wife, and child—from Michigan. They came well "heeled," with cattle and horses, and settled in Salt Flat, to rest before crossing the range into California. Mr. Bollen, as we all called him from the first, on account of his—to us—aristocratic looks and ways, and his thousand dollars in cattle and horses, was hail-fellow-well-met at once, and Salt Flat seemed almost self-sacrificing in helping him with his herding, and getting his family fixed. There was no room for wonder. To us miners, working and living together, with little female companionship, the advent of Jenny Bollen was an event that sent most of us into a very pleasurable state of excitement. It acted upon us in different ways.

It was early winter, and the night after Mr. Bollen's arrival, the one saloon of Salt Flat contained the entire population of the camp. Mr. Bollen's two cow-boys were there, too, and so many times were they called upon to drink, and so many questions were they asked, that, at two o'clock, thinking discretion the better part of valour, they apologised for having to leave so early, and retired unsteadily to the waggon. Bill and Harry Welch, after arguing for nearly an hour over the colour of Jenny's hair, came to blows, and were forcibly ejected by the rest of us, and stuck head downwards in the snow. We sat late that night, or rather morning, discussing Jenny's virtues. After mature, though rather vehement, deliberation, the following resolutions were unanimously carried:

"That her eyes were like rock crystal. That her hair was better nor Mrs. Snaggles—the wife of our uncertificated doctor. That she was between sixteen and twenty-four"—on this delicate question scarcely two of us agreed. "That her face was 'a pictur.'"

But Mrs. Snaggles or no Mrs. Snaggles—who, after all, could only provoke comparison in the unimportant item of hair—Jenny Bollen was undoubtedly a very pretty girl, and there were two men in the camp, at least, who had already fallen—after their fashion—very much in love with her. These were Frank Menner and Grizzly Dan. Frank "made the running" from the first, and though Jenny laughed at them both, it was clear she liked Frank the better of the two. There was little time, however, even for such scant courtship as men in Salt Flat thought necessary.

Mr. Bollen struck his tent, loaded his waggon, and passed on over the great Divide, with his horses, his cattle, his wife, and his daughter. Two or three of us took upon ourselves, as many other people have done before, to offer rough sympathy and gratuitous advice.

"Struck a snag, ain't you, Frank? But don't you cave, my boy, plenty more where she come from."

"Hello, Frank," said another, "sorry the gal made a fool of you; better luck next time. You see gals think so much about the looks of a feller."

But he was soon silenced.

"I reckon you chaps," drawled Frank, "thinks as yu know all about most things, and Jenny and me in partic'lar. But you've let the dollar drop this time. You are right about looks, Josh; old Bollen wouldn't ha' gone off so quick on'y he saw your face, and was afeard the heifers might stampeda. See here," and he threw us a little note.

I caught it, and looked at the address. It was marked, "Frank. Butcher. Salt Flat." He had evidently forgotten to tell her his surname. It was written on the merest scrap of paper. Cattle dealers don't carry around portfolios in the West of Colorado. But it was folded in what was to us a most remarkable manner, so remarkable that it took us some time to get the creases out and read its contents, while Frank leaned back against his sign-board—F. Menner, Butcher, from the East—with all the careless nonchalance that a five-cent cigar and an easy attitude could lend to his appearance. After much difficulty we spelled out the following:

"We shall be at Oretown to-morrow. There is a church there. "JENNY."

We handed back the note without attempting to refold it.

"I guess you han't read it yet yourself,"

said Josh, thinking of the difficulty we had experienced.

"Read it? Gals always fix letters so back East. I'm off ter-morrer," said Frank, stuffing the little note into his pocket, as if it was only one among many that he had already received.

"Stage goes to-night," we suggested.

"Maybe; but, you see, I am going to marry now, and mustn't chuck my dollars away on feeding Nathan's horses this trip."

So, in another hour, the story had gone abroad that Frank was going to Oretown to bring back Miss Bollen as his wife, and needed money, and Salt Flat had made a very solid collection for him. It was nothing if not miscellaneous; some contributed their washings of gold-ore for that day; some, in default of the "ready," gave a note of hand; others money; while among the various subscriptions were a pipe and a pair of shaps. But Frank was more than satisfied, and thanked us all heartily, and that evening he started for Oretown by the stage. All Salt Flat turned out to see him off, and just as the driver was gathering up his reins preparatory to giving the deafening crack of his long whip, which was the signal to the half-broken bronchos to leap into a gallop for the start, Grizzly Dan stepped out of the crowd.

"Frank," he said, "I hain't got nothing to put in the bag to-day; but maybe I'll strike ile by when you gets back, and if so, I'll get you a wedding present then."

"I want no wedding present from you, Dan Hunter; I shan't mind getting no welcome from you; and I guess you won't feel much to give away. When we have settled down a bit you can come and give my wife your congratulations."

Frank was standing up in the old waggon, which did duty as a stage, his eyes glittering with hate, and his whole face working with jealousy even now; but he failed to raise even the least spark of anger in Dan's face.

Then the whip cracked, the horses sprang into motion, and the lumbering stage-waggon rolled out of sight.

Dan did not appear at Simpson's saloon for some days after this, and we were getting to wonder what he was doing, when, one evening, he walked into the "Salt Flat General Store," where I and some others were sitting at the stove, and said:

"Boys, I've struck it."

We jumped to our feet, and shook his hand cordially. Public feeling had had a reaction. Most of us thought, after that day when Frank went off on the stage, that Dan would have made Jenny the better husband, while all the camp was in a ferment over the discussion as to which was "the best man"; for that Frank and Dan would fight some day—unless one or other should show the white feather—there was every likelihood. Bets and wagers were freely made, and Dan was made favourite—with pistols—at three to two. So that we were not sorry that he had got a slice of luck at last.

"Tain't much, boys," he went on; "but I wish it had come sooner. I reckon it's the end of the old lead Myers struck last fall, down by the creek."

It was not many days after this that Frank and Mrs. Menner came back to the Flat. They had spent some time together at Oretown, and old Bollen had given Jenny twenty head of prime cattle to take back with her. For some time all went smoothly. Jenny was not demonstrative, but on the whole they were an affectionate couple; but towards the end of winter, things began to tone down. Jenny was observed to fail in her spirits, and Dan, of course, noticed it. He seldom spoke to her, and when he did, it was only as any other of us. But she made it very clear that, next to her husband, she looked on him as her best friend in Salt Flat. Frank Menner was consumed with jealousy. At last the first meeting took place. It occurred, of course, in the Salt Flat saloon. High words had passed from Frank to Dan, and Dan had quietly sipped the abominable mixture that was sold as whiaky—finest old rye—and said nothing. At last Menner, emboldened by the other's silence, threatened him.

"And see here, Dan Hunter, if I catch you sneaking around my wife again, I'll cut out your liver where you stand. You may do as you like about other fellows' wives; but you shall not hang after mine."

Dan dropped his glass to the floor where it broke into twenty pieces. For a moment his hand sought the pistol at his side. Then he withdrew it quickly, while his face for once showed signs of a greater anger than he could command. With clenched fist he strode to where Frank was standing. The latter was not slow to seize his advantage. In an instant he had drawn a revolver and fired. At the same

moment Dan struck him. There was a dull thud as a heavy body fell to the ground, and, as the smoke cleared, we saw that Frank lay stunned upon the sanded floor of the saloon, while Dan, his left arm hanging limp and shattered to his side, stood above him. Planting one foot heavily on his antagonist's body, he strode over him, and in total silence we saw him walk towards his claim by the river till the last house in Salt Flat's one street hid his retiring form.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the row at Simpson's saloon, there was a truce to open hostilities for some time. It was generally felt, and no doubt Frank knew it himself, too, that Dan could have killed him if he had wished. The lightning-like rapidity with which his hand, dropping the glass, had flown to his revolver, before Frank had had time to make a movement, was evidence enough of this. But there was another reason for the deceptive calm that fell over the camp. Western morality is lax, and its law, in many cases, entirely in the hands of Judge Lynch; but we were not disposed to allow any but fair fighting. Dan kept himself very much to himself. He never referred to the cause of his broken arm; and though he could not at present work his claim, he had already taken out a very tolerable pile, and had no need to do so. Frank came down twice a week as usual to the store to see if any beef was wanted, but his reception was never a very hearty one.

"The boys hev been getting among the deer lately. We shan't want beef again till blacktail and elk play out."

So Frank thrust his hands a little deeper into his pockets, and went off whistling to his cabin by the creek. But sometimes, though he would deny it to himself furiously, the thought would strike him that he was not at home with his wife; that he had married too far above him. Neither in word nor deed could he find reason to reproach Jenny, however. She was not as affectionate as she might have been in her ways, perhaps; but he did not look for that. Indeed, it would have bored him. But he felt that he was too rough for her, and even in his language he would sometimes forget that he was not in Simpson's saloon, and shock the poor girl's ears with some profanity. At such times he would remember how her father had fought against the match — had

threatened never to speak to his daughter again, and how she, sacrificing much and braving all, had yet married him in her father's teeth. Then he would throw himself passionately on his knees by her side, strong man as he was, and in broken words beg and implore her to forgive him. The very vehemence of his repentance frightened the girl, and made her even more afraid of him; and she would sit leaning back, with her hands clasped tightly over her heart, and looking with far-away, frightened eyes at him kneeling there at her feet.

"Oh, yes, yes; but, Frank, don't say such things to me again."

And there was a deadlier danger yet; a worse than Damocles' sword hanging over his head, a demon that whispered mockingly in his ear: "All this is nothing; wait — wait till you have hurt her worse, and you will be powerless to seek the forgiveness that she could never give you."

Day after day he had passed the sign, "Simpson's Forty Rod Whakey," outside Salt Flat saloon, and tried to accustom himself to looking on the burning letters, and the laughing crowd within, to hear the clink of the glasses and the rattle of the dice, and to think of them as things that had nothing to do with him. He had long ago finished the little keg of finest old rye in his cabin, taking it sip by sip when temptation became too strong for him; but the last few days' total abstemiousness had told upon even his powerful constitution, and this evening, as he was walking home, a sickness overcame him, and he staggered, and fell heavily on the snow-covered ground.

There we found him, and carried him back to the saloon he had been so anxious to avoid, and forced brandy between his lips. But it was a long time before the many doses administered had their effect and Frank opened his eyes at last.

His eyes stared blankly before him, so they gave him more brandy; and then, when at last he rose, with their help, to his feet, and wished to go, they would not hear of it till he had sat down and rested.

"Take a drink, old chap, and tell us about it," they insisted.

It was a long "rest" that Frank took that night in Simpson's saloon. Towards midnight he began to look less pale and ill. A bright colour shone in his face, and a fierce light in his eyes. He asked where Dan was.

"Ain't bin nigh the town but once since—you know," they told him.

Then, looking round at the familiar decorations (!) on the walls, and the old thumb-worn dice-boxes on the table before him, he said :

"Seems like old times, boys, to-night; like as if I had been dreaming the last month or two. Shake you drinks, Tom?"

The dice were brought, and the game, if such it could be called, went on for some time. Now they shook for money; and Frank lost. But still he played higher. Then he lost his horses; then his wife's cattle.

"Come, Frank, you've had enough for to-night," said one well-meaning miner.

But a fierce oath was the only answer; and the one man who tried that night to save Frank Menner shrugged his shoulders and left the saloon.

"See here, fellers, any man 'ut 'll back his claim against mine—any man in'r room."

And again he lost. Still he did not go. He had seven or eight dollars in silver still. The bar stood by his elbow. He was thirsty.

When Frank returned home in the grey of the morning it was leaning on the arms of two companions, to find the light burning still in one window there. Jenny was sitting up, watching, wondering, fearing. Frank saw it, and for a moment stood up without help, a shuddering horror seizing him. The other two cast significant looks at one another and slunk back the way they had come.

"He'll do now, he can stand alone all right," was the thought with which they strove to excuse their desertion.

It was never thoroughly known in Salt Flat what happened during the early hours of that fatal morning down at the cabin by the creek; but Bill Welch, and Doc Snaggles, returning from a round through the woods before breakfast in search of game, heard several rifle-shots in quick succession down among the foothills, and, having had little luck themselves, took the trail leading in that direction, in hopes that they might get a shot at any deer being driven up. But none was to be seen. When they came out on to the level they saw a strange thing. A man, hatless, pale, and reeling unsteadily, stood among the thick tuft grass at the edge of the foothills, gesticulating and flourishing a smoking rifle. Around him lay some five

or six dead or dying cattle, and close by the side of the trail they had been following, a young bull, the pride of all Bollen's herd of shorthorns, lay, his shoulder broken by a shot, struggling painfully to rise, and filling the air with his piteous bellowings. Even as they stepped forward, another bullet, striking him in the back, ended his tortures, and the poor brute fell back dead. At this moment the man, turning round, saw them, and throwing his gun over his shoulder began rapidly ascending the hill. When he had nearly reached the top he turned, and shaking his clenched fist at them, poured out a torrent of abuse and profanity.

"Take your cursed cattle," he cried; "hoofs and hides are all you will get by me," and he recommenced climbing, more furiously than ever, the thick patches of brush and cotton-wood hiding him from sight.

"Come, mate," said Bill, shaking with suppressed anger, as much at the man's wanton cruelty as at his language to them—of which latter, indeed, so furiously and indistinctly had he spoken, little save the end had been intelligible—"we must fetch this news to camp. Let's make tracks sharp. Who do you reckon it war?"

"Frank Menner. I saw his face as he went over the hill. Bin on the tear, I reckon."

Bill whistled.

"Phew, what'll Jenny say, I wonder?"

"I calc'late she won't 'ave much more to say to that skunk. Did you hear what he gave us?"

"I heard plenty—enough for Bill. I reckon if that chap comes mooching around Salt Flat this side of Christmas there'll be two of us what'll have something to say to him—you bet your bottom dollar on that. Guess thar ain't no flies on you nor me."

So in a short time the little community were eagerly discussing this new act in the drama that was being played in their midst, while not a few went up to the foothills to see with their own eyes the dead cattle and the trail Frank had taken. Some of them, those who were best on a trail, followed him for a mile or more, and returned with the news that he had broken off into the dense pine-woods on the slopes of Hamlin's Peak, where further tracking was impossible. It was evident that he had taken to the woods to hide, there being no trail in that direction by which he could cross the range, and all that could be done now was to hurry back to the cabin by the

creek, and see what awaited them there. There was a little crowd already assembled round the door, and Joe Carr held up his finger to the new-comers to enjoin silence.

"We sent Grizzly Dan in," he whispered; "he'll let us know if we're wanted."

Silently and quickly they took their places among the others and waited. Big, bearded men, wild, reckless, gambling natures—men who had most of them heavy sins on their consciences, and who acknowledged no sentiment, and perhaps had never before felt anxiety on any but their own account, stood there, troubled, anxious, and pale, waiting for Grizzly Dan to come back and tell them the worst. Presently he appeared. His face was drawn and haggard, and he did not seem to look towards them.

"Doc" Snaggles stepped quickly forward, and when he reached the door he dropped his hat on the ground outside before crossing with noiseless steps the threshold of the little cabin. When he came back at last, he answered at once the unspoken question of the crowd:

"No, not dead; she'll come round presently. If you chaps 'll hurry back to the Flat, and get some brandy and tinned fruit, you'll maybe do more good than standing around here. But I'm afraid she's a rough time coming, poor gal. Dan 'll stay and help me all I want."

So the rest of us went back to the Flat, and sent down all the delicacies—such as they were—that our "general store" would yield. Indeed, if it had not been for some of the more reasonable among us, who suggested that Jenny had "a small appetite, anyway," the little cabin would hardly have held the miscellaneous supplies we wished to contribute. Even so, there was not a man in camp whose sympathy was not represented in the offerings that Harry Welch took down to the sick girl, who, for all we knew, had suffered grievous injury at the hands of her fugitive husband. Doc Snaggles met him at the door, and, signing to him to put down the hampers outside, led him round to where the window of the new room looked out on the half-frozen stream and the snow-burdened hills beyond. On tip-toe they went forward, and saw Jenny lying, very pale, her head resting on Dan's arm and talking rapidly. She was looking straight towards them, but seemed unconscious of their presence. The two men looked at each other.

"Yes, delirium. Come in; she won't know you. When's Mrs. Snaggles coming down?"

"She'll be here right away. Say, Doc, you don't think she'll die, do you?"

"If it was you or Bill, boy, I should say no; but she ain't no tough 'un, like us. She's been bad, and she'll be a durned sight wus yet."

So they came in, and began moving aimlessly about the little room, "fixing things," as Doc said. Jenny was quieter now. Dan sat, with his head buried in his hands, in the silence that was more than words. Now and again he would look towards the girl at his side, to assure himself that, this sudden stillness was really another interval of sleep, and not the death he so much dreaded. When he did so they could see how drawn and pinched with horror was his own face. Only Doc Snaggles knew what he must have suffered that last hour, sitting silently in the same place, listening to the girl for whom he would willingly have sacrificed his life, repainting unconsciously the miserable details of the past night. Only Doc could, even if he had wished, have told how Dan, when he first saw her body lying on the cold floor of the little parlour, had thrown himself wildly at her side, and, with a passionate emotion of which no man would have thought him capable, bathed her poor, heated forehead with his tears, and then, rising suddenly to his feet, had invoked Heaven's awful curse upon the man who had done this thing.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. SNAGGLES came soon after; and, while Doc went out to meet her, Jenny began to speak again. Dan bent over her to catch the words. Presently there came a pause. She did not seem to see him, looking straight through the window to where the old waggon trailed over the range to Oretown. But a softer look came into her face when she next spoke:

"Dan."

A wild thrill of joy swept through him in spite of all his misery. He bent his head a little lower, and for a moment his lips touched her face.

When the others came into the room again, they saw a new light in Dan's eyes; and when Doc told him that he would no longer be needed that day, he grasped his hand and shook it.

"You will do your best, Doc, I know.

Think as if it was your wife—your own wife that you'd die for—you are trying to save. Oh, she must get well! she must get well!"

Harry Welch walked with him as far as the ford, where their ways parted, and Dan spoke for the first time since they left the cabin:

"Tell the boys," he said, "to let Frank be. You see, he is her husband still, I suppose. Unless," he added, significantly, "unless he comes back agen."

And we followed, if we did not understand his wish. I think that since it was clear now that Frank had gone—"va-moosed," as we said—we all looked upon Dan as having a certain right in the matter; and certainly our sympathies, which were, after all, as ready as they were rough, were entirely with the man who had been so faithful to Jenny all through; who had been so far above Frank's jealousy and spitefulness, and was even now so generous to the man who had robbed him of his love, and whom he must in his heart have hated with a deadly hatred. Indeed, his feelings in this matter, his anxiety that no violence nor harm should be done to Frank, simply because he was Jenny's husband, were unintelligible to us; but we respected them, and the man also for them. Never a day passed but Dan was up at the house, asking for news of Jenny; and the relief he showed in his anxious face when Mrs. Snaggles would tell him she wasn't no worse, anyway, enlisted that good woman's sympathies to such an extent that she would sometimes let him come to the door and look in for a few minutes, before he went back to his claim.

The latter was showing up well, and Dan worked at it for more than the usual hours, and a great deal harder. Severe manual labour did him good, and this and the delicate handling necessary for washing out the gold, saved him perhaps from breaking down under the anxiety that lay so heavily upon him. At night he would stroll up to the Flat and join in a game of euchre; but he made an inattentive player; and once Joe Carr, standing behind him, saw him quite unconsciously discard a left bower in exchange for a nine. After a little he would get up, a trifle lighter in pocket, nod to the boys, and go off to his cabin, generally to sleep the sleep of sheer exhaustion.

One day Doc Snaggles came riding into the Flat with news. Jenny had come more to herself, and was out of danger.

"But there's something I don't rightly ketch on to," he said. "She knows me and my wife, but she don't seem right in her ideas. She hain't said nothin' about that night—don't remember the first thing about it, I reckon—and she's always asking where Frank is, and why he don't come home. She says she saw him often while she had the fever, but don't call to mind what he said to her. Maybe she'd get a bit clearer if she saw Dan."

So Dan was sent for, and told that Doc wanted him down at the cabin. The Snaggleses were both in the parlour when he got there, and Jenny was sitting up in a chair by the table, and, pillows being scarce in Salt Flat, was propped up with a curious selection of furs and blankets. She looked terribly pale and ill, but there was a vacant expression in her soft brown eyes—a something wanting, as it were—which spoke worse for the poor girl's mind. She did not wait for Dan to speak. As soon as he was well within the room, and she could see his face, she held out her hands to him with a glad little cry.

"Oh, Frank! Frank! you have come back at last. Why have you kept away from me? I have been so ill; and I saw you every day——"

"Jenny, it is not Frank—only Grizzly Dan."

But she did not heed him.

"You are going to stay now, aren't you, dear? And we'll be happy again, like we were before—before—something happened. What was it, Frank, that happened?"

"I can't, Jenny, I can't. You mustn't talk like that. I will come and see you to-morrow, and——"

"Frank's got to go to Orstown, Jenny, after stores," Mrs. Snaggles hurriedly interposed, "and must catch the stage. He'll get back soon, and you'll be better then."

"Git away, you fool," she whispered to Dan, brushing quickly past him, "tho'll bring back the fever."

So Dan stumbled out of the room, his eyes wet with a strange mist of tears. Half unconsciously he found his way to his own cabin, where, throwing himself on his knees on the bare mud floor, he prayed as he had perhaps not done since he was a boy in Missouri.

"Takes me for him!" he cried. "Oh, Heaven, help me to help her, for I love her still, love her more than ever!"

Salt Flat, of course, heard—through

Mrs. Snaggles—of the scene in Menner's parlour, and many were the opinions delivered as to the course Dan should take. The majority, judging others by themselves, agreed that Dan should marry Jenny "right off" since she looked on him as her husband, if he wanted to, and ignore Frank, as a man who, if he was not dead, ought to be. But Dan became so furious at the suggestion, that the idea was at once dropped as a subject which, if persevered with, would in all likelihood end in shooting.

"Boys," he said, "I'm not that sort, I reckon. There is on'y one way out of this for Dan Hunter, and that's the California trail. You chaps as like can 'freeze out' for my claim, and if the feller as gits it will give me a broncho I'll git through before next snowfall. That's fixed."

Dan tried hard to keep away from Menner's cabin that day; but as the evening came, and he remembered how he had always gone to enquire after Jenny after his day's work, he found he could not resist taking the same direction once more.

"It's a sure thing," he said to himself, as he set out, "I can't skip the country without a word. Jenny, my dear, you'll never know how fond Grizzly Dan was of you."

When he got to the cabin, and asked Mrs. Snaggles how Jenny was, she shook her head.

"She's got'er mind fixed on it you're Frank," she said, and she seemed quite determined not to allow him to see her.

"Maybe she won't see me again," said Dan, "I'm going over the range."

"For good?"

"Ay."

He could say no more, a lump seemed to stick in his throat as he looked piteously at her. She did not hesitate any longer.

"I'm real sorry for you, Dan," she said, as she let him in, and she left him, and went off to the kitchen. When she got back she could hear Jenny sobbing bitterly inside. Bill Welch, who had come round to enquire, stood outside the door with Dan. For a moment she looked angrily at the latter; but a glance at his face stopped her.

"Good-bye," she said, holding out her hand, "good-bye."

And the two figures moved away into the gathering darkness. Their way lay across the meadow-land, under the foothills, where Frank Menner had shot his

cattle a fortnight before. The coyotes had made short work of the carcasses, and presently, as they went silently along through the crisp snow, they saw the skull of the young bull lying in their path by a small clump of aspen trees. For a moment they stopped and looked at it, each thinking of the man who had done so much wrong and harm in the last few months. Suddenly, without a sign of warning, he stood before them. He wore no hat, and his clothes were torn about him. Mad, fierce, and shaken with fury, he stood there and laughed aloud.

"Caught, you hound," he cried, "coming from my house—coming from my wife."

He raised the pistol in his hand, and fired wildly. Dan's hat fell to the ground. Bill Welch looked hurriedly towards him. Was the man mad? He stood there, his hands folded over his breast, silent and immovable. Again Frank stepped forward and raised his weapon, when in an instant his foot caught in one of the horns of the animal he had killed, and he fell headlong on his face. At the same instant the second cartridge exploded. A cry, sharp, clear, and piercing, rang out on the frosty night air, and when Bill went forward and turned over his body he saw there was blood trickling from the man's side. Dead! Shot through the heart by the bullet he had intended for his rival.

Salt Flat is no more; but down on the creek, where Grizzly Dan's cabin used to stand, there is a neat little white house, and Dan and his wife are well known in Oretown, and for many miles around. She still calls him Frank, and often sits by the hour puzzling over her "second marriage," and trying—trying to "remember." But she is happy, and men say that Dan is happy too. There is a rough grave among the foothills where she is never likely to pass, and a still rougher headstone. A plain piece of deal boarding stands upright in the soil—still faintly bearing the epitaph the miners of Salt Flat deemed sufficient:

"'Frank Menner'
shot hisself,
the other was the best man."

CURIOS OF THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH.

Now and then one comes across very strange examples of "English" composition. These may be said to vary from

the form well known as alipshod, to the extraordinary results of dictionary consultation by foreigners. From our Indian Empire we occasionally get some choice instances of the latter kind of writing. According to Lady Dufferin, a colonel once received a letter from a native beginning "Honoured Enormity"; and the correspondent had, no doubt, looked in the dictionary, and considered this method of expression eminently suitable.

The same writer tells us that during an examination a man was instructed to write an essay about the horse. This he did in brief terms; in fact, in a single sentence, which ran: "The horse is a very noble animal, but when irritated he ceases to do so." Another student of our mother tongue's peculiarities had to write upon the difference between riches and poverty. He entered more fully than the above man into his subject, and summed up his disquisition with the remarkable assertion: "In short, the rich man welters on crimson velvet, while the poor man snorts on flint." We leave the intelligent reader to consider the meaning of particularly the concluding portion of this statement.

We have just experienced a somewhat humid summer; and it is interesting to note that distant climes have also been complaining of an even more distressing condition of the weather, as witness the following extract from the Allahabad "Morning Post," of date two or three months back:

"On the 3rd inst. at 1 p.m. there was a heavy tempest of a dreadful wind, and it is followed by a downpour of heavy rain. The great nalla, which flows through the heart of the town, came into heavy flood, so that almost all the adjacent houses were for a long time in water, the poor dwellers were in great catastrophe, and they were deeply drowned in the whirlpool of difficulties to escape from the threatening danger. Some wretched people took refuge in the highest and uppermost part of their houses; I am poured into the horrible imagination and sorry still to give a most terrible account of a poor and wretched pair of fakir, who was flowed to the distance of a quarter of a mile, but fortunately caught by the trees, and thus they have saved their lives. In short, the people of Burwani greatly suffered in this stormy tempest."

Then the writer finishes his graphic tale by entering into the financial losses sustained through the above "heavy tempest."

Japanese "English," however, is at least as intricate in its style as the above examples. A firm, dealing in fishing-tackle, having sent a circular to a merchant in Tokio, Japan, received the following communication:

"DEAR SIR IN YOURS,—We should present to your company the bamboo fishing-rod, a net-basket, and a reel, as we have just convenience; all those were very rough and simple to you laughing for your kind reply which you sent us the catalogue of fishing-tackles last, etc. Wishing we that now at Japan there it was not in prevailing fish gaming, but fishermen, in scarcely there now, but we do not measure how the progression of the germ of the fishing game beforehand. Therefore, we may yield of feeling to restock in my store, your country's fishing-tackle, etc. Should you have the kindness to send a such farther country's even in a few partake when we send the money in ordering of them, should you?

"I am yours, yours truly —."

It would appear that the writer, through a "yielding of feeling"—whatever that may be—is inclined to give an order. Also, he hopes for a development of sport in the form of "fishing game" in Japan.

Writing of Japan reminds us of the prospectus of the Coolie Contracted Company, which was recently issued from the town of Yokohama in that region. "The object of the company," it appears, "is to evacuate an evil conduct of the coolies, which had been practised during many years, while we will reform their bad circumstances. As the object is the above, we will open the works very quickly and kindly as we possible, without any measure more or less." The company promises to undertake such business as, "transactions of general goods relating to marine, land, and house removal—a accompanying man in going and coming of funeral rite and marriage ceremonies."

It is not necessary, however, to go so far as Japan for curiosities of this sort. Last summer the Hopburger Hof, in Bavaria, announced the possession of a "pompous garden of restauration"; while the Bavarian State Railway issued the notice: "Following plays will be performed over the following days, when a certain number a larger company of new-strangers-visitors could no more obtain tickets for the principal play. Each such a following play will be announced whenever possible. Single as well as turn and return tickets

can be paid for at all Bavarian stations. Tickets for the Round of Travel just so for backforwarding of the luggage direct dispatch will take place at Market Oberammergau!" In this the concluding note of exclamation is amusing.

A school in Frankfort not long ago announced in English, "Swimming instructions given by a teacher of both sexes." And is there not just a shade of suspicion that the following sentence in a Review was the work of a German pen? "Mr. Rudyard Kipling furnishes a brilliant but too melodramatic to be what is apparently meant to be realistic, contribution."

At a coal-crushing apparatus shown in the Belgian section of the Edinburgh Exhibition, was posted up the statement: "Having been struck with the inconveniences resulting from the cleaning of coals by the humid way, I endeavoured to find out a process by the dry. In the beginning I had recourse to the air which gave directly satisfactory results, but their regularity was subordinate to multiple circumstance." At a later stage in his experiments the exhibitor "Searched an apparatus which might have influence on the materials according to the friability of the same, and whilst pulverising separate useful from the strange materials"—went on through processes curious enough, but scarcely more extraordinary than the account given of them.

It is stated on good authority that, within recent times, on the main road near Canterbury, was the notice: "Traction engines and other persons taking water from this pond will be prosecuted;" while, about thirty years ago, the following announcement might have been seen at Tynemouth: "Visitors are cautioned against bathing within a hundred yards of this spot, several persons having been drowned here lately by order of the authorities." An eating-house near the docks had the notice: "Sailors' vitals cooked here;" and the following announcement was, many years ago, placed on Hammersmith Bridge: "No persons are allowed to remain on the bridge, and are requested to pass on." With reference to this, "Punch" asked: "If persons are requested to pass on, and yet not allowed to remain on the bridge, are there policemen in attendance to collar them and walk them over without stopping?"

Within the past few months a new magazine was started in a Northern city. The opening article said: "We shall not

pay exclusive homage to the mighty in intellect, but to any one who honour us with contributions, whether in philosophy, poetry, or general literature, from anything original in design, profound in thought, beautiful in imagination, or delicate in expression will be considered worthy of a place in this magazine." Perhaps the ability of the printers was not equal to the ambition of the projectors of the above periodical—if ever it became "periodic."

The "Poll-Book" of the Liverpool Election, published in June, 1790, contains—says a writer in "Notes and Queries"—this curious notice: "T. Johnson having promised an errata, but from the anxiety of the public, has published in its present state, hoping few errors will be found; and will be thankful to those, who may find mistakes to intimate them to him, as they shall be rectified gratis, which may be conveniently added to the end of the 'book.'"

A picturesque interviewer in an American paper, giving a description of Cardinal Gibbons, said that his red biretta "shows beneath his Roman collar like a red cravat." This, remarked an English contemporary, "is like saying that a man wears his hat under his waistcoat, or his smoking-cap round his neck."

CONCERNING THE CENSUS.

SUNDAY, the fifth of April next, is fixed as the date for the tenth decennial census of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, and on the following day there will be collected in England, Wales, and Scotland the particulars of the population living on the night of census day. In Ireland, owing to a different method of enumeration, the work of taking the census cannot be accomplished in one day, and provision is made for its performance within a period to be fixed by the Lord Lieutenant.

The population returns, compiled prior to the present century, are far from reliable, being merely conjectural, and having no better basis than the payment of poll-tax and similar imposts. No systematic enumeration took place before 1801, and some account of the development of the census, and the circumstances under which it was initiated, may not be out of place now.

In the year 1753, a bill, which from the fact of its being backed by sundry members of the Government, in addition to private

members, appears to have had the support of the Ministry, was introduced into the House of Commons, for taking and registering an annual account of the total number of the people, of the marriages, births, and deaths, and of all persons in receipt of parochial relief. The alarm and vehement opposition with which the Bill was met, probably surprised its supporters as much as we, in these latter days, are amused at the violent language and curious arguments attending its debate. It was actually feared by some that an epidemic of disease, or a national misfortune, would follow the numbering; military authorities argued that such a register would demonstrate our weakness to foreign enemies; the proposal was described as totally subversive of the last remains of English liberty, and it was looked upon suspiciously as likely to provide a basis for new taxation. Conscription, too, was scented, and this was perhaps warranted by the register being advocated as necessary in the event of a serious war, when, failing a supply of voluntary recruits, the furnishing of a certain number would be compulsory on every parish. Notwithstanding opposition, the Bill was passed by the Commons, but thrown out by the Lords on the second reading, and nothing more was heard of the proposal until nearly fifty years had elapsed.

Meantime the population had increased by leaps and bounds, and in the year 1800, when a new census bill was introduced, the public mind was agitated, not by the fear of our impotence to furnish an adequate army, but by the apprehension that the means of subsistence were not increasing in ratio to the rapid growth of population. Parliament was occupied in discussing the prevalent dearth of food, while the Malthusian doctrines, advanced about this time, attracted a large measure of attention. Public opinion generally had changed in favour of an enumeration of the people, and the bill became law without opposition. The first census was taken on the eighteenth of March, 1801, and has been uninterruptedly repeated ever since in the first year of each successive decennary.

In England and Wales the Local Government Board is the central authority for taking the census, the Registrar General being the directing officer. In the first four censuses the actual enumerators were the overseers of the poor, who were selected as being the only agents

available. They collected information as to the inhabitants of their parishes by personal enquiry, in whatever manner they deemed best, and on that data formulated their returns. Their process of enumeration was confined to no definite period, with the result that the same people present in different parishes on different days were in all likelihood counted more than once.

With the 1841 census dawned a new era in enumeration. The Registration Act had shortly before come into operation, and for the purposes of that Act and the new Poor Law the whole country was divided into districts with superintendent registrars, and sub-districts with resident registrars, upon the latter of whom devolved the duty of registering the births and deaths within their sub-districts. No more suitable organisation could be found for the purposes of enumeration, and to its machinery was transferred the business of the census. Every registrar is required to parcel out his sub-district into divisions each of a size capable of house-to-house visitation by a single person in the course of one day, and to make a list of qualified persons to act as enumerators, whose appointment rests with the superintendent registrar. The householder's duty in the matter is probably well known; but a brief recital of it, with a reminder that its wilful neglect is attended with a pecuniary penalty, may be useful.

In the course of the week prior to the census day there is left at every dwelling-house a schedule for the purpose of being filled up by the householder with particulars as to the name, age, sex, profession or occupation, condition as to marriage, and birthplace of all living persons who abode in his house on the night of census day, and also whether any of these persons are blind, deaf mutes, or of unsound mind. In Wales and the County of Monmouth it is requisite to state whether persons speak Welsh only, or both Welsh and English.

In the case of jails, hospitals, asylums, and public and charitable institutions, the governor or master is responsible for furnishing all particulars he can with respect to the inmates, and as regards persons travelling or on shipboard, and the houseless poor, the Local Government Board obtain particulars by such means as appear to them best adapted for the purpose. The population of a place as returned by the census is its actual and not

its resident population — therefore, all persons found in a place on census night, be they strangers or natives, in houses, on ships or shelterless, are treated as units in its population, the only exceptions to this method of counting being persons travelling by rail or other vehicles, and who cannot be enumerated as abiding in any particular place on census night. Such persons on arrival at their destination in the morning are counted as part of the population of the place to which they then came. It is obvious that the alteration in favour of a single fixed night greatly removes the chances of omission and double entry. On the day following the census date the householders' schedules are collected by the enumerators, who copy them into books, adding an account which they have taken from the best information available of all persons living within their divisions who have not been included in the schedules. It is probable that the number of these persons, consisting mainly of the vagrant class, is understated owing to the difficulty experienced in their enumeration. The books are subsequently verified and made as accurate as possible by the registrars, and transmitted with the schedules to the Registrar-General for tabulation, and with the presentation to Parliament of preliminary and detailed abstracts, the work of the census is finished, a year or two usually elapsing before the final abstract is completed.

In Scotland the Secretary of State superintends the census, the Registrar-General for that country acting as in England. The procedure is practically the same, save that the sheriffs of counties, and the chief magistrates of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Greenock, Paisley, Leith, and Perth, exercise the functions of superintendent registrars. The particulars furnished include information as to whether persons speak Gaelic only, or both Gaelic and English.

The business of the Irish census is performed under the control of the Lord Lieutenant and his Chief Secretary. The enumerators are officers and men of the Dublin Police Force and Royal Irish Constabulary, who, on the day after the census date, and one or more next consecutive days, fixed by the Lord Lieutenant, severally visit, between the hours of half-past eight in the morning and six in the afternoon, every house within such districts as are allotted to them, and take an account in writing of the number of persons

who abode there on the night of the census, with the usual particulars concerning them, and of their religious belief. The 1891 census will be the fourth decennial one embracing an enquiry into the religious profession of the Irish people. The Acts regulating the 1861 and 1871 censuses, made compulsory under penalty a statement as to religion; but by subsequent Acts the statement is optional, and in 1881 five hundred and thirty persons seem to have availed themselves of the provision, and refused information. The accounts thus taken are delivered by the enumerators to certain of their superior officers, nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, who, after examining them and rectifying defects, transmit them to the General Register Office, where they are digested under the direction of the Chief Secretary.

As an indication of the effect on the population of emigration and immigration, it may be noted that in the decade covered by the last census, the English and Welsh emigrants exceeded the immigrants by upwards of one hundred and sixty thousand. In Scotland the excess of emigrants was estimated at over ninety-three thousand, while the Irish population was diminished by no fewer than six hundred and eighteen thousand persons, who were calculated to have permanently left the sister isle during the period in question. Current returns show a falling off in the number of emigrants from all parts of the kingdom.

The work of compiling the census is greatly increased by the multiplicity of territorial areas into which the country is divided, all of which have to be taken into account; and the labour is augmented by the difficulty of tracing the boundaries of the sub-divisions, which intersect and overlap each other in a manner bewildering even to local knowledge. Civil and ecclesiastical parishes, municipal and parliamentary boroughs, urban and rural sanitary districts, poor-law, registration, police, and judicial divisions, may be cited as examples of the areas which have to be dealt with.

A noticeable feature in the census returns is the number of curious names of occupations, which in most cases give no clue to the nature of the business. Take for instance, "budget-trimmer," which has no political significance; "bull-dog-burner" — unknown, we hope, in canine circles — and such occupations as piano-puncher, dog-minder, sand-bagger, bear-breaker, doctor-maker, keel-bulley, blabber and coney-cutter, with hundreds of others

equally quaint, and inexplicable to most people. No doubt many of them were originally nicknames, but have passed into current use, and their appearance in the census schedules renders it necessary to take them into account. To assist the census tabulators in classifying such occupations, a dictionary has been prepared, mainly from information furnished by leading manufacturers as to the technical and local terms used in the various industries; and this dictionary contains between eleven and twelve thousand occupations, each having a name.

The female age returns of the census cannot be regarded as more than approximate. The extent of the falsification of ages of girls and women cannot, of course, be stated; but the tables for the age period twenty to twenty-five are probably the least to be depended upon. It is invariably found on examining the tables of successive censuses, that the young women aged from twenty to twenty-five are considerably more numerous than the girls aged ten to fifteen ten years earlier, of whom they are presumably the surviving remainder! It has been observed, too, that there is a tendency to exaggeration on the part of old persons uncertain of their age; and of the one hundred and forty-one persons who claimed centenarian honours at the last census, it is doubtful whether many of them had completed the hundredth year of life.

It may reasonably be assumed that each successive census is more accurate than its predecessor by reason of increased experience among local officials, and improved methods of enumeration. The growth of education has done much to facilitate the correct filling-up of householders' schedules, while the prejudice which existed against, and to some extent hampered, the earlier censuses, has now practically disappeared. Indeed, on the completion of the last census, official recognition was made of the goodwill and intelligence with which the people generally lent their co-operation in the work.

"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "Dame Durden," "Gretchen," "Darby and Joan," "Sheba," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V. "KILLED—OR CURED?"

THE little parlour looked dusky and cold in the dying twilight. Evidently Jean had thought that I was not coming downstairs

again that evening. She had lit the candles on the mantelpiece, and their dim light fell on the dark figure standing there—and gazing intently into the dull and flickering flame.

At the sound of my step he turned and looked at me. I saw his face was very white. All the gay youth of it was saddened and changed. His eyes had a sleepless, haggard look as of suffering endured until repression avenges itself.

"You—you wished to see me," I said, pausing a few yards off from where he stood. I did not offer to shake hands; what use to be conventional or formal, now? Did I not know full well what he had come to say? Did I not know equally well what my answer would be?

"Yes," he said, and he moved a step or two nearer. "But won't you shake hands! Are you still unforgiving?"

I extended my hand mechanically, and then seated myself in the chair he drew forward.

"I—I hope you believe me when I say how sorry I have felt for you in all this time of trouble," he said, with hesitation. "Words don't count for much—and—and somehow I could not write. I thought perhaps you would see me if I called. It is very good of you."

"It is not good at all," I said, brusquely. "I knew it would have to happen sooner or later."

"You say that as if you wished to—to get it over, like an unpleasant duty. Are you still angry with me, Athole?"

The reproach in voice and look irritated me.

"Why should I be—angry?" I said. "I only wish to hear why you wanted to see me—why you are here?"

"I will soon tell you that," he said, very quietly. "You—you are of course aware that my father's death has made me a comparatively rich man. There is no necessity now for me to lead a wandering life, or be anything but a respectable citizen. I think, however, I owe it to myself and to you, Athole—to be perfectly frank. I—I spoilt your life in the past; let me atone for it in the future. We are still young. Freedom has come to you, prosperity to me. Let us forget all this dark and miserable time, and be happy as—as once we dreamt we would be happy. I know it is very so to speak; but there are circumstances which make conventionality seem a very poor thing. I want you to forgive me, Athole

—to take me back. You can't have forgotten; you can't have changed. Good Heavens! why do you look at me like that?"

"I may not have forgotten," I said, coldly; "but I have—changed."

He drew back a step. He looked at me with flaming eyes—angry, incredulous.

"I don't believe it," he said, passionately. "You are trying to deceive yourself, and me; you think you owe it to your husband's memory to appear shocked at—at my speaking so soon. Do you think I cannot read you better; that I did not study every detail of your life; that I could not see how dreary it was—how miserable!"

The grain of truth in his words stung me to the quick. I felt the blood leap in angry tide to my face.

"Was it for that reason you came on the yacht at my husband's request?" I cried, stormily. "To spy out my life and my surroundings while accepting a hospitality you now abuse! It is on a par with most of your actions."

He grew very white.

"Athole, you know me better than that," he said.

"I only know that but for you my life would have been safe and happy, sheltered by a good man's love and devotion. I only know that I pained and saddened his life every hour I shared it by my blind and wilful selfishness. I only know that for my sake he went to his death. I only know that always, always his voice is ringing in my ears out of that cruel sea. I only know that of all the mistakes in my miserable, mistaken life, I regret none so much as the mistake I made in loving you—or—or thinking I loved you—and so wilfully blinding myself to a worthier and a better love."

"That is enough," he said, as he drew back, and stood looking at me with white face and burning eyes. My voice had suddenly broken, a choking sob cut short the torrent of passionate words. "Did I not say when first I knew you," he went on, "when we took that very first walk, that a woman's promises were like clouds—drifting, not stationary! She only thinks she loves, and when a man believes her he finds it is some passing fancy she has dignified by that name. If—if you had really cared, you would not have changed, you could not!"

His voice was low and fierce; his eyes burned darkly in the whiteness of his face. I sat there, my hands clasped, the great

tears falling on my black dress. But neither his passion nor his wrath moved me. My heart seemed dead to any appeal or any plea of his.

Suddenly he threw himself down before me, clasping my hands, and raining kisses on them between his broken words.

"Oh, Athole, Athole, listen! It can't be true, that you have ceased to care—that you have forgotten all that used to be. It is not so very long ago, and Heaven knows if I wronged you that I have suffered enough for it. What has changed you? This cold, hard woman is not my little, gentle love of long ago—who was so pitiful and so kind—and so forgiving."

I looked at him kneeling there, humbled, pleading, despairing. Once it would have been my sweetest revenge. But now I only felt a great sorrow and a great pity; yet neither stirred one pulse of the old love, or broke down that cold, strange barrier which death and remorse had raised between us.

"Douglas," I said, more gently than I had yet spoken, "I cannot even to myself explain what has changed me; but I am changed utterly and entirely. Once love seemed to me everything, and I gave myself up to it without a thought or regret. Oh how I loved you then, Douglas! I had no thought or wish or desire that was not of you or with you; there was nothing you might have asked that I would not have done. Think how you repaid me. One cannot go back—one cannot live twice through such a time as that. The first repayment of my love for you was faithlessness; the second—insult. Then it seemed to me that I had only been worshipping a false idol—that even if I could believe and care in the old blind, trusting way, I should only wake to fresh disappointment and fresh sorrow. I wanted a love great and strong and unselfish, to lift me to higher things, not let me fall to lower. You taught me distrust, then sorrow, then shame. Is it such a wonderful thing that I should have changed; that I should look out on life with eyes of suspicion and of fear! You blame me very harshly. Cannot you understand that this change was not brought about by any wish or will of mine? I—I cannot even to myself explain it. But it is here—like lead or ice about my heart—I feel as if nothing could ever soften or subdue me again."

There were no tears in my eyes now. But I felt the hot scorch of his as they fell on my clasped hands.

"I think," he said, at last, "that you wrong yourself. This is only a feeling born of grief, and regret, and trouble. Your nature is not cold, and your heart is not hard. You were right to blame me for—for my madness—for what you justly call an insult; but surely you might understand a man's feelings are not always under his control; and I had suffered horribly all that time on the yacht, when I kept aloof from you, and schooled myself every day to treat you as if—as if you were no more to me than the others. I know I should not speak like this now; it must seem presumptuous and ill-judged; but in a way I am forced to it. Penryth is going back to Australia at once, and he wishes me to go with him. I could not make any plans or leave this country without saying what was in my heart, without asking for some hope, however small. And I would be patient enough now, Athole."

I drew my hands coldly away.

"I have no hope to give you, Douglas. I do not say it from any pretence of propriety, or prudery; you, I think, know me better than that. It is the simple truth. I—I do not love you any longer."

The truth was out at last; the strange, inexplicable truth which had haunted me for so long now, defying me to contradict it, or its accusation of faithlessness on my part. He listened, then dropped my hands and rose slowly to his feet.

"I am to understand," he said, coldly, "that all is at an end, that you never wish to see me, that I am to consider myself dismissed—for ever?"

"You put it very harshly," I said; "but I suppose that is what it amounts to."

"You are not saying this out of any foolish revenge, any jealousy of that old folly about another woman?"

"If you mean Mrs. Dunleith, you forget that I know her real character. It was in your journal. I have neither jealousy nor fear of her, nor any desire to be revenged for what she once made me suffer."

"Then this change is—real, or—am I to suppose I am supplanted? There is Kenneth."

"Do not insult me," I said, coldly; "I have given you an explanation, a perfectly true one. You are at liberty to believe it or not. Be very sure of this, that widowhood is to me a sorrowful reality, and its sorrow is all the greater because of

the regret and remorse that must for ever embitter its memory. Have I said enough?"

"Quite enough," he said, his voice cold and hard, his eyes alone betraying the wounded pride and fierce anger he sought to control. "Your sentiments are a credit to your position; I wonder which will last the longest?"

I rose abruptly.

"We need not discuss that point. I did not expect you would understand. It must seem strange; but I have only spoken the truth of my feelings."

"I know you were always particularly candid."

"If I said I was sorry, you would not believe me, and I cannot be hypocritical and offer you friendship, or—or talk of a future when we shall meet, and can afford to laugh at all this as a long-dead folly. I almost hope, Douglas, that we never shall meet again on this side of eternity."

"Will nothing move you?" he cried, barring my way to the door, as I turned in that direction. "Have you considered what this means for both of us? If you send me from you now, I swear I will never come back; never ask what I have asked to-day; never give you the satisfaction of knowing you can make a man suffer to gratify what I believe is, after all, your own wounded vanity, or your desire to revenge on me the pain you say I once caused you."

"It is only natural," I said, "that you should misjudge me. But you may believe I am speaking the simple truth; I am not acting out of revenge; it would be a base and foolish thing to do; and much as I have suffered at your hands, Douglas, I would not, if I could, deal you back one pang, one tear, one regret, of all the many you cost me. Once I might have wished you to suffer; but not now."

"Then it is only that you have ceased to love me?"

"That," I said, "is the simple truth. I cannot explain it, but I feel it. No doubt it sounds strange. I think it must; but it is the truth, and it is best you should know it."

"I—I suppose," he said, turning away, "I am rightly served. All my life I have been heedless, selfish, inconstant, taking what pleasure came in my way, careless of suffering caused to others. Still, it is very hard——"

"I am very sorry," I said, more gently;

"but I think all feeling and sentiment of that sort died out of me when—when I woke from that terrible time of fever and learnt my loss, and seemed to recognise my long selfishness and blindness. When once one recognises a change like that, there is no possible resurrection. One seems to drift apart in the spirit as in the flesh. The word 'together' has lost all its magic."

"You analyse your feelings as mercifully as a vivisectionist would a victim," he said, bitterly; "I am glad to leave you in so comfortable a frame of mind. Life will soon resume interest for you. It is only the heart whose love has outlived hope that knows what real loneliness is."

The dull fire had died out, the little parlour looked cheerless and gloomy. I shivered as with sudden cold. His words echoed mournfully in my ears—I whose life was so lonely and so empty now.

But it had to be. I could not recall the past, could not pretend to live in its memories, and be glad as once I had been glad.

I stretched out my hands to him.

"Forgive me, Douglas—and say good-bye. Believe me, it is better you should know the truth even if—if it pains you, than wake to disillusion and regret."

He took my hands in both his own. The anger died out of his face, leaving it very sad and very white.

"Perhaps," he said, "you hardly know how cruel you are; but why should I blame you? Another woman would not have spoken so truthfully. You must be very sure of yourself to have done so; for, as truly as there is a heaven above us, Athole, I will never—after to-night—look upon your face or seek your side again. You hear me?"

"Yes," I said, quietly. "I hear you."

"And you have nothing more to say?"

Calmly and steadily I looked up in his face.

"No, Douglas—I have nothing more to say."

"Heaven forgive you, Athole—and— Good-bye."

CHAPTER VI. A HAVEN OF REST.

THE day after I had parted from Douglas, Huel Penryth came to say good-bye to me.

I think he must have guessed something of what had passed between us; but he said very little, only when he rose to take his

leave, and was holding my hand, he looked somewhat wistfully at me.

"You would like to ask me a question, I know," I said. "Do not be afraid. You will not hurt or offend me."

"You are quite sure?" he asked, eagerly. "It is not for my own sake, and Douglas is really in great distress. He was raving like a madman last night. I could hardly believe what he said. Is this parting irrevocable?"

"Yes," I answered, simply.

"There is no hope, no chance that the past might be forgotten? You are both very young, and you—how little happiness you seem to have had! Are you acting rightly? Are you quite sure of your motives?"

"I am quite sure. I cannot explain why I have changed; but I only know that it is a fact. I have made one mistake in marriage. I will not—knowingly—make another. It seems as if years divided me from that time when I loved with a girl's unquestioning trust. I could not go back—I could not. If I—in time—had any thought of—of what he wishes, I should never be content, nor content him. One cannot live through such feelings twice in a lifetime."

"You are right," he said, gravely; "one cannot."

"I wish he would believe," I said, earnestly; "but he only thinks me heartless and—and fickle. My life seems to have all gone wrong, I think. I have always disappointed and pained every one who has cared for me."

"I have often wished to tell you," he said, gently, "that I am sure your husband understood you far better than you imagined—and at the last—"

"Oh hush, hush, I cannot bear to think of it. What right had I to be so blind—so selfish? And he will never know that I was so sorry, that I would, oh so gladly, give my own life now to save his, so brave, and good, and useful. That is the sting in it all"—I went on, unheeding the tears that came falling helplessly down my cheeks—"I may repent, cry, pray, grieve as I please; but he will never know. Oh, why are we not more careful, more loving, more considerate, living as we do always in the shadow of death, and not knowing from day to day what may happen? Oh, if we only were sure of meeting, sure of some time—any time, however distant, bringing us once more together—when we could explain, and understand, and be

forgiven! Life is cruel enough — but death——”

“Perhaps,” he said, gently, “death is less cruel than you imagine. It is for the living I always feel regret. They have to bear the loss, and suffer for the mistakes; to see the sun rise in hopelessness and set in despair. But I do not think you need reproach yourself so bitterly. Your husband had not one harsh or bitter thought of you. He blamed himself for selfishly binding your life to his, for taking advantage of your youth and inexperience. He did not easily express his feelings—those quiet, self-contained people never do—but I know they were very deep and earnest.”

“I am sure of that,” I said, sadly. “If only it were not too late. You can have no idea of how that time haunts me. The wild storm, the cruel sea—and he—facing it alone. I wake at night hearing the howl of the wind and dash of waves, and his face seems to rise from their midst and look at me so reproachfully.”

I shuddered involuntarily, and covered my eyes with my hands.

“It is no use to speak of this now,” I said, at last; “and to Douglas least of all. He knows that I was very unhappy at first; that I married without really caring very much for Donald Campbell. He cannot understand that I should change—that remorse and regret might have opened my eyes to his real worth.”

“No,” said Huel Penryth, in the same grave, gentle way. “He cannot understand—yet. But he will. Do not let that thought distress you. I know Douglas Hay; I read his character long ago. He will suffer sharply, cruelly for a time; but, afterwards, there will be consolation. His is not the nature to mourn and endure. The clouds are dark and stormy at first—but the sunshine behind is too strong for them; they are dashed aside, pierced, scattered, and forgotten. So he will forget. If I might speak to you candidly, frankly——”

“You may,” I said, looking steadily up at his face, and wondering how so much strength and calmness could be allied to a pity so evident—a gentleness that a woman might have envied.

“Then I will tell you that I have rather dreaded you might make what I felt would be another mistake. You would be less content even with Douglas Hay than—than you esteemed yourself with Donald Campbell. His is not the nature to mate

with yours, and his good looks, and fascinations, and brilliant qualities would soon pall upon you. These three years of your life have been an education of your nature and mind, and all that is highest and best in them. You could not endure a new disappointment—a new failure. You would accept love now with fear and questioning—not with simple faith and the halo of idealisation. So it is far, far better that you reject it altogether than run the risk of a disillusion so cruel that your life would for ever suffer. You need never be wholly dependent on others. Your nature will widen and your sympathies enlarge. As time goes on you will learn to live for deeper, and greater, and more satisfying things than dreams, and passions, and sentiments. I can foresee for you all the possibilities of consolation. They lie within yourself, and suffering and loss have taught you the way to find them.”

The echo of those words is still ringing in my ears. I have put them down here, but I cannot reproduce the voice that lent them force and inspiration. And yet——

Well, let me be truthful, at least. It is to Huel Penryth I owe the secret of this change in myself. From the hour I met him, life no longer narrowed itself into petty grooves and beaten tracks. Something in his nature rang out a trumpet-call to me, and all things small, selfish, narrow-minded, fell before that bold and ringing challenge. I am a happier woman for knowing him. I cannot but acknowledge that—and yet even his friendship I may not keep. He, too, fades out of my life, and the veil of silence and separation falls between us from to-night.

Let my tears rain down unchallenged and unseen, save by this safe and silent confidant of so many follies and mistakes. I have time enough now to recall and think them over—time enough to see how willfully I cheated myself into delusion—time enough to grieve, and repent, and pray.

My soul cries out in passionate longing to the dead I have loved and wronged. To the living one can always atone, but to those dear ones, in the silence, what can one say? What can they hear or know of the remorse they leave behind?

Answer that, oh, wise men, preachers of eternal mysteries, expounders of great truths. Answer it in such wise that our breaking hearts may know peace, and

feel sure that what you say is true and worthy of belief.

I sit here alone in the hush and silence of midnight; and as I lift my head I see, facing me in the mingled light and shadows of the room, another face. The eyes look back at me, large, and deep, and strangely sorrowful.

With a start I seem to know them as my own.

"We are looking at each other, you and I," they seem to say, "as we have looked so often, in childhood, maidenhood, womanhood, in love, and sorrow, and despair. But the soul behind shall look out one day with no tears to blind, and no despair to darken; for only through suffering can it win peace, and by grief and pain alone is its redemption bought."

The days come and go. It is nearly two weeks since they laid Grannie in her grave. How long ago it seems—how cruelly, hopelessly long! Some strange spirit of unrest is in me to-day. I cannot remain here. I am weary of the confinement of the house, its loneliness, and silence. I will dress and go out, away to the hillside where she lies at rest—away to that quiet home of the dead I have so often envied, set in the solemn peace of that fairy hill.

The afternoon is cold but bright. I can easily walk there and back before the dusk falls. I will tell old Jean, in case any of the Camerons call here. Bella is expected daily. She might arrive, and they would be sure to come round for me.

How can I write it! How can I say it! Where am I to find words coherent and expressive of joy! It seems almost a wrong to put it down—and yet I must—I must. So much of my life is here. Shall not the silent friend of these past years chronicle also this glad, and amazing, and still almost incredible surprise!

I walked along the winding road that curved itself in gradual ascent to the crest of the hill. I knew where Grannie's grave was, and I passed under the now leafless trees, and among the still and low-lying dead until I reached the spot.

Neither stone nor cross yet marked that resting-place, only dark earth and a few flowers, withered and dead from the frosts of those past chill nights. It was very quiet there. No solitary figure was anywhere in sight. No sound save the flutter

of some passing bird disturbed the air, and beyond, in the western sky, was the red, wintry sun, burning over dark hills and faint patches of unmelted snow.

I stood there gazing down, a thousand strange chaotic thoughts whirling through my brain. But always—always that same wonder. Did she know!—could she see me? Was that silence as deep, and that barrier as impassable on her side as on ours, who still lived, and loved, and mourned?

Had she and Donald met, and could she tell him how I sorrowed for his loss? Would he be glad to know I had not forgotten, and had not ceased to grieve? Would he—

I think it was at this point my thoughts broke off. A step approaching on the hard, firm road disturbed them. It came nearer, nearer, nearer—so close that out of wonder I turned.

For one moment I thought I must be mad or dreaming. A ghastly terror seized me, and all of earth seemed but one heaving tumult under my quivering limbs.

Could the sea give up its dead, or was this Donald that I saw—pale, worn, wasted, the shadow of the stalwart Highland chieftain I had known, but looking at me with Donald's honest eyes, holding out Donald's big, eager arms in diffident and yet most eager welcome?

"Athole—my lassie—my dear wife!"

Donald's voice! Oh, merciful Heaven! No dream—no fancy this! With a cry, eager, wondering, incredulous, but glad, as surely never word or cry of mine had sounded to his ears before, I flew to those outstretched arms, clinging to him, weeping, laughing, with a gladness almost fearful, so wondering, so incredulous it still knew itself to be.

But it was true—quite true; Donald was alive, safe, well; holding me to his heart, soothing my tearful, hysterical sobbing, murmuring every fond and tender word that love could speak out of its newborn gladness.

And in that gladness truth spoke out at last. I told him all—everything—of that lurking shadow which so long had been between us; of my folly and its bitter lesson, and all my suffering and self-reproach; and I heard in honest, broken words, whose rough eloquence was sweet to me now beyond all honeyed phrases of romance, how deep and true was his love

for me—how long and how patiently he had suffered and kept silence.

I did not learn the story of his escape then. That followed long afterwards; but here by Grannie's grave—here on that lonely hill which seemed destined to be the stage of so many dramatic episodes in my life, we poured out our hearts in plain and sober truth at last, and hand in hand beside her narrow resting-place, we "kissed again with tears."

L'ENVOI

AND now to satisfy enquiries as to how the Laird escaped, and, having escaped, how so long a time elapsed before I heard of it.

The boat was caught in a squall and carried out to sea long before they could help themselves. Here they found that they were in the teeth of a furious gale, and for hours battled with deadly peril. Towards dawn, the boy Davie, exhausted and spent, was washed overboard. In making an effort to save him, Donald lost steering way of the boat, and a huge wave capsized it. How he struggled and managed to scramble on the keel and keep himself afloat he could never explain; but, nevertheless, in the grey dawn he was found in that perilous situation, and picked up by a Dutch schooner, in the very last stage of exhaustion. The long exposure, and the blow he had received when dashed against the side of the vessel, brought on concussion of the brain, and for months he was never wholly conscious, nor could he in any way recollect or explain who he was to the kindly folk who had saved him and taken him on their own voyage out of sheer inability to comprehend his language, or guess his position. When at last he drifted back to sense and memory, he was appalled at the length of time that had elapsed since he had been swept out to sea.

He was in a strange country, and he had no money. His only valuables were his watch and chain, and a ring with the seal and crest of his clan. With these he raised enough money to bring him back to England. Then he wrote to me at Corrie-moor, telling me of his escape, and that he was on his way home. Following the letter with all speed, he stayed at Inverness to ask news at Craig Bank. Here he nearly scared old Jean out of her wits,

and learned that we had all believed him dead, and that I was no longer at Corrie-moor. He left Craig Bank, and followed me to the cemetery, resolved that I should not remain an hour longer in ignorance of his fate.

The rest I have explained. And yet, it is not quite easy to explain how deep and strange a thing was this new joy of mine; with what fear and trembling I accepted it, knowing to the full my own unworthiness. How strange it seemed to look up at that kind, honest face, and read in its pallor and lines of suffering the story of the past months; yet to read behind and above all those signs a radiance, and content, and deep-felt thankfulness that I had never seen before! How strange to hear murmured again and again, as if the words had acquired a new meaning, "My wife, my wife!" How strange to see tears in those keen blue eyes, that I used to think were cold as the sky of his own land! How more than strange the change in myself, that swept away all restraint, and coldness, and diffidence, and for once—oh, thank Heaven for it!—let me show him all my heart, and ask for pardon and forbearance, and trust in that future which at last held brighter and more certain hopes for both.

And now what need to say more!

The few blank pages of my journal still face me; but I have no wish or will to write of what "may be." I am content with what "is."

If tears are in my eyes to-night, they are not altogether sad; only I wish—I wish Grannie was here to rejoice in my joy, and be sure of my exceeding thankfulness. And so, with trembling hand, I write these last lines. Surely the mistakes of the past will be my guide for the future—a warning to avoid the pitfalls and the snares that still lie scattered on the path of life; that path on which the feet of womanhood are now set, supported by the full, deep strength of a true and honest love.

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CHAPTER II.

HELEN and Selma Malet were, for the time being, living alone together in the little house at Hampstead, enjoying what the latter called an "interregnum of companions."

Two years earlier the loss of their father and mother within three months of one another had left them very desolate. They had no brother and no other sister. They were very fairly well off, however, and after much discussion and some opposition from their guardian, they had set up house-keeping for themselves, finally conceding to his insistence the chaperon they had been very anxious to do without. They had been fortunate in their first duenna; they had become very fond of her and she of them; but when, about a month before the Tyrrells' "at home," she had been obliged to leave them hurriedly and her successor had proved not to be immediately forthcoming, they had persuaded their guardian—Selma best knew how—to let them "chaperon one another" in the interval.

Mr. Cornish, the guardian in question, was their father's cousin, and the only relation Helen and Selma had in England. But the Cornish family was a host in itself, numbering fifteen all told, and ranging in ages from the father, who was nearly sixty, to Elsie, the pet and baby of the family, who was nearly six. The two girls had established themselves very near the big house which accommodated their numerous

cousins, so that in the alarming crises which were apt to arise in the household economy—such as the intoxication of the cook, or insubordination of the housemaid with reference to "followers"—Helen invariably took sage counsel with her guardian's wife, who went with both girls by the name of auntie. As a matter of fact, it was Mrs. Cornish, and not her easy-going husband, who had insisted on the chaperon, and it was also Mrs. Cornish whose permission had been absolutely necessary for the present interregnum.

Though Selma had been all her life as much at home in her cousins' house as in her own, though she had known and loved them all from her earliest childhood, they were nothing in her life but the merest background, against which the centre figure was John Tyrrell. He had been an intimate friend of her father's, even before Selma was born; he had been a part of her life as long as she could remember anything, and as long as she could remember anything it had been he and he only who had thoroughly understood and helped her. It had been John Tyrrell who had overheard the two little sisters of nine and six playing a game invented and directed by the younger, in which the tragic drowning of a doll in a washing basin formed an important feature. It was John Tyrrell who had stood almost thunderstruck at the lamentation of the bereaved parent of six years, until he was roused by the frightened crying of little Helen as she besought her sister not to play "like that"; and it was John Tyrrell—a much younger John Tyrrell than the man of to-day—who had picked up the little actress as she passed from simulated to very real sobs and tears, and kissed and soothed her into quiet. From that day

there had existed a very curious and much laughed at comradeship between the young actor and the baby girl; but her father and mother, thinking it very possible that the precocious germ of dramatic instinct might never develope, and determined that no pressure or even encouragement from without should be mistaken by Selma, as she grew older, for a vocation, had exacted from Tyrrell a promise that he would not talk to the child of his art, nor in any way whatever encourage her dramatic tendencies.

Of Selma's first play, eight years later, John Tyrrell was the hero, and it was his acting which then showed her for the first time what, as she expressed it in childish, excited language, was "the matter with her." The man who received that girlish, enthusiastic admiration, was no longer the man who had consoled the over-strung child of eight years before; but the girl interested him, and when there was no longer any room for doubt as to her destiny, he took her in hand, and taught her and trained her as no other man living could have done. He was a hard master; the genius and enthusiasm which possessed her, and which nothing could have repressed, appealed to him, almost in spite of himself, and he exacted far more from his pupil than he had ever exacted from himself. And to Selma he seemed the very incarnation of the art she loved. Every difficulty, every dumb, struggling emotion which seemed to her overwhelming when she tried to deal with it alone, took definite and coherent shape for her in that little room in Kensington, as she listened to John Tyrrell; the word spoken to her there was her law; the praise given to her there made the highest satisfaction of her life.

Her uncle was her guardian in the eyes of the law, and, in the outlines of her domestic life with her sister, she knew that it was he who was to be consulted and obeyed. But of all the hopes and fears, the love and the labour that made up her own individual existence, John Tyrrell was the arbitrator. All her fervent, burning young life was absorbed in the art to which, in her imagination, she saw herself devoted for as long as she should live. Unconscious as she herself was of the fact, her uncle's authority was a shadow to her beside the authority of John Tyrrell.

It was the morning after the Tyrrells' "at home"; a radiant May morning, into which the atmosphere of late June—June

as it should be, not as it too often is—seemed to have strayed by some delightful accident. It was about eleven o'clock, and Helen Malet was sitting at her writing-table, surrounded by account-books with which her pretty, round face looked somewhat incongruous, particularly as it did not at the moment wear the portentously business-like and practical expression which Selma always declared meant a half-penny wrong in the week's accounts. Helen Malet was two-and-twenty, with a bright, good-natured face, to which the ready smile seemed the most natural expression, blue eyes, which had hardly lost their childish frankness and simplicity, and smooth, brown hair. She looked at times, in spite of her pretty eyes, older than she really was, for she was a very sensible, thorough-going housekeeper, and early responsibility had set certain firm lines about her mouth. On all the details which lay within her sphere Helen was decision itself; out of her sphere no one was more easily influenced and led.

Her attention was apparently wandering this morning, for she added the same column three times over, and the consecutive results were forty-two, twenty-nine, and a hundred and five. At last the front-door bell rang, and Helen's cheeks turned red and hot; not so hot, however, as they became a moment later, when the door opened quickly, and a strongly-moved woman's voice said:

"Helen, my child! my dear child!"

"Auntie!" was all Helen's reply as she hid her face on Mrs. Cornish's shoulder.

"My dear, if Humphrey were my own son—and, indeed, you know there has been no difference in my love for him, dear fellow—I could not wish him a better wife. And, Helen, I don't think I could wish you a kinder husband, much as I love you. Bless you, my dear!"

Mrs. Cornish concluded with a hearty kiss, and held the girl very close for a minute. She was a woman of about five-and-fifty, with a sensible, kindly face, and a firm, decided manner, as a woman would naturally have who should rule satisfactorily over a household of twelve children. She released Helen at last, and turning the rosy face towards her, looked at it with the slightest shade of almost motherly anxiety in her eyes.

"All the same, my dear," she said, "I must say I'm surprised. I never thought it would be Humphrey; and, to tell you

the truth, I never thought Humphrey would marry. He's kind and to be relied upon, certainly; but—but— Well, my dear, you know his ways; and I've no doubt it will be all right."

"I think so, auntie," said Helen, very softly.

And Mrs. Cornish, though the doubts in her mind were very far from being set at rest, could not find it in her heart to put them further into words.

"What does Selma say?" she said, cheerfully, after a slight pause, in which she kissed Helen again, very lovingly. "Is she at home—and visible?" she added, with a smile. Selma's working hours were sacred, and in no wise to be rashly intruded upon!

But before Helen could answer, the door opened quickly, and Selma herself came in, bright and beautiful as the May morning.

"Auntie, dear," she said, as she kissed Mrs. Cornish, "I saw you come, and I knew you and Nellie wouldn't want me just at first. Am I too soon now?" she added, as she took her sister's flushed face, with a pretty, tender gesture, between her two hands and kissed it.

For answer, Helen drew her arm through Selma's, as Mrs. Cornish said, kindly:

"You are as pleased about it as your cousins, then, Selma? That's all right."

"Of course I'm pleased, auntie," responded Selma. "I'm pleased it's Humphrey, to begin with. There was always a dreadful possibility of Helen's marrying some one I couldn't get on with. We don't quite always like the same people, do we, Nell? And I have so wanted her to fall in love, because I know she'll be so happy. It will suit her so to be a married lady, won't it?" And she took up her sister's left hand and played with it half-mischievously, half-lovingly.

Mrs. Cornish looked at the lovely, girlish face with a smile.

"It will suit you, too, some day, Selma," she said.

"Me!" cried Selma, with a bright, rippling laugh. "No, auntie—never! I have my work, you know. There isn't room in my heart for another love."

Beneath the laughter in her voice there was a thrill and purpose which was unconscious and unquenchable; but on the surface her tone was brightness itself. Selma very rarely talked of her future,

never paraded her enthusiasm or her devotion to her art. With Mrs. Cornish she was always especially reserved, for she had an instinctive feeling that the former would not understand her. And perhaps it was because Mrs. Cornish was herself conscious of this barrier between them, that she could never bring herself—though she honestly and conscientiously tried to do so—to feel for Selma quite as she did for Helen.

"Well," she said, now, echoing the girl's irresistible laugh almost in spite of herself, "I must go. You must come round to dinner to-night—both of you. Your uncle wants to see you, Helen, of course." She turned, with a smile, from the crimson Helen to Selma, and went on, "Come as early as you can—in time for a cup of tea."

Selma did not smile back at her. The expressive face had lost all its brightness, and the eyes were dark and grieved-looking.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, auntie," she said. "Don't think it's unkind of me—Nell, darling, you won't—I can't come. Mr. Tyrrell wants me particularly to see Coquelin, and Miss Tyrrell is going to take me to-night. Oh, I'm so sorry!"

Mrs. Cornish's face changed slightly.

"Can you not telegraph to Miss Tyrrell, Selma?" she said. "This is rather an occasion, isn't it? I think we shall think it kinder of you if you make an effort to be with us."

Selma put an impulsive, appealing hand on her sister's.

"Oh, please, auntie, dear!" she said. "Don't put it like that; I would directly if I could, but it's the only night, and Mr. Tyrrell wishes it particularly. Nell!"

Helen, on whose ears no appeal from Selma had ever fallen in vain, responded promptly to this one.

"She must go really, auntie," she said, eagerly, "she can't help it. I shan't be a bit hurt, dear," turning consolingly to Selma. "Don't look so miserable. I'll explain to—to—Humphrey, and auntie understands quite—don't you, auntie? Of course you must see Coquelin!"

Mrs. Cornish settled her mantle with the air of one who fails to see the necessity pointed out to her.

"Well, Helen," she said, "if you feel like that about it, and if you are so ready to answer for Humphrey, I shall not say any more. But I must say I think it is a pity. Good-bye for the present, my dear."

Bless you!" As she took the girl into her arms again. "Good bye, Selma!"

"Please don't be vexed, auntie," pleaded the girl, laying a caressing hand on her. Selma, with her large eyes swimming in tears, and her beautiful mouth quivering, was not to be resisted even by Mrs. Cornish. The severity died out of the latter's face, and she pressed the detaining hand affectionately.

"I'm not vexed, dear," she said, "at least I shall not be vexed for long. Don't trouble so about it." And, with a parting kiss of forgiveness, Mrs. Cornish went away.

Helen did not go "round" to the Cornishes in time to have a cup of tea. All the grown-up cousins seemed to be making excited and congratulatory inroads all day long, and when at four o'clock in the afternoon the sisters were left alone together, Selma, who was not to be with Miss Tyrrell until seven o'clock, half-coaxed and half-commanded Helen to stay at home as long as possible.

Helen was sitting at the tea-table in the little drawing-room, and Selma, having finished her own tea, had abandoned her chair, and was half lying, half sitting by her sister's side, every line of her figure in its careless, childish pose as absolutely graceful as it had been when she stood up to recite in John Tyrrell's drawing-room. There had been silence between them for some minutes, and Selma, who had been looking straight away into space with a strangely grave, far-away expression in her eyes, broke it suddenly.

"Nellie," she said, "you do understand, don't you?"

Helen started. Her thoughts, too, had been far away as she sat there so quietly with such a happy light on her face. She blushed guiltily.

"What did you say, dear?" she said.

"I—I'm afraid I didn't hear."

Selma laughed a low, musical laugh, and, turning her head, kissed the other's hand as it lay on her knee.

"You're very happy, my dearest, are you not?" she murmured.

"Yes, darling!"

"I'm so glad! I can't tell you in the least how glad I am for you. You don't know how often I've thought about it for you, and wished and wished that it would come. I could never think of you in the future without seeing a married Nell. There are some girls like that!"

"Are there any girls not like that, Selma?"

Selma smiled.

"Numbers and numbers," she said, and then her eyes glowed suddenly with an enthusiasm which was very young and very pretty. "There are girls like me," she said softly, with a thrill of happy pride in her voice. She paused a moment, and her face flushed and paled rapidly. Then she put herself aside, and returned to the consideration of her sister's affairs with a delighted, entirely impersonal interest very strange to see in so young a woman on such a subject.

"When did it begin, Nell?" she said, eagerly. "I can't think how it is I've never thought of it."

"Did you never think of it?"

"Never! Not once. I'm—I'm just a little surprised, dear, of course; but you know how fond I've always been of Humphrey. You'll tell him, won't you, how very, very sorry I am about to-night—or I'll write him a little note, I think. Oh! that was what I began to talk to you about," and the happy face grew grave suddenly. "You do understand, dear, don't you?"

"Of course I do. You are not troubling about that still? You don't mind what auntie said?"

Selma let her beautiful head fall back on her sister's knee, and looked straight upward.

"No!" she said, dreamily, "I mean yes. I do mind, and I like it."

"Selma, what do you mean?"

"I don't know whether I can explain to you quite—I don't want to gush! You see I must do it—go to Coquelin to-night, I mean—and when one loves anything as I love my—my work," Selma's voice sank to a mere murmur, "one is glad to do hard things for it; this is a tiny thing I know, but still it was hard to vex auntie. Of course I should do it just the same if it vexed you, my own dear; but it would be dreadful, and—it doesn't, does it?" And Selma, inconsistent, sensitive, and intensely affectionate, lifted herself into a sitting position with her clasped hands on her sister's knee, and looked beseechingly into the admiring face above her.

It was fortunate that Helen's look was answer enough, for before she could speak the door opened, and a man stood on the threshold.

"May I come in?" he said, quietly, and Helen and Selma sprang to their feet with the same cry, simultaneous, but very different in intonation.

"Humphrey!"

Humphrey Cornish was not the present Mrs. Cornish's son. Mr. Cornish had been twice married, and Humphrey's mother had died when he was born. He was a brown-haired man, rather under the average height, slight in build, with plain, pale features, and very good dreamy brown eyes—as great a contrast, even, physically speaking, to his strong, handsome step-brothers and sisters as it was possible to imagine. And, mentally, the contrast was even greater. Humphrey Cornish was a painter—the only member of his family, within the memory of man, who had developed the faintest taste for art in any form, and he was quiet and reserved to an extent which, by the frank, outspoken family of which he was so incongruous a member, could only be defined as "odd." Selma sprang towards him as he stood on the threshold, and held out both her hands. There was always a curious sympathy between herself and her silent cousin.

"Ob, I am so glad!" she cried. "Humphrey, I am glad you've come. I did so want to tell you how very pleased I am!"

He pressed her hands closely, and looked beyond her to where Helen stood, with a deep light in his eyes, which seemed to shine oddly on that simple, girlish face.

"Thank you," he said; and then he passed on into the room, and Selma was seized with a sudden, irresistible desire to look into the state of the weather.

When she turned round again, Helen and Humphrey were standing side by side, as strongly contrasted in every particular as it is possible for a man and woman to be, but with the same love light shining alike in the thoughtful brown eyes, and in the simple blue ones.

"You are coming round to dinner, of course?" said Humphrey.

"Not Selma!" interposed Helen, quickly. "She is going to see Coquelin. She is rather afraid you will think it unkind of her."

Humphrey put the idea aside with the slightest possible smile, and looked across at Selma.

"You will get a great deal from him," he said. "Are you studying his method?"

"No," answered Selma; "Mr. Tyrrell thinks it would not be good for me. But he wants me to see him just once. He says—"

But Helen interrupted her.

"No," she said, with a laugh, "Selma, you are not to begin to talk shop to Humphrey. You will be late. Come and dress."

And in spite of Selma's protestation that it was still quite early—punctuality was not one of Selma's strong points—Helen, who was never known to be late for anything, took her laughingly by the shoulders and marched her out of the room.

The sensation she had made at the Tyrrells' "at home" was not the last of the kind made by Selma in all unconsciousness that season. The next winter was to see her first professional appearance on the stage; and, much against her will, John Tyrrell made her go several times with his sister to large parties at some of the best houses in London, and made her occasionally recite at them. This last ordeal was terrible to the girl, though she could hardly define even to herself why it should be so.

"I hate it!" she said to John Tyrrell, passionately. "I hate them all, and I hate myself. What I do is bad enough, I know that very well; but I feel as if their praise, the very way in which they listen to me insulted me somehow—as if I were almost insulting myself! Of course, I will do it if you wish it; but please—please don't."

To such speeches as these John Tyrrell's usual answer was a slight smile, over the meaning of which the girl puzzled in vain, and a few words of direction as to the poem she was to recite on that particular occasion of which the immediate prospect had given rise to her appeal. If he made her go out comparatively little that season, it was for reasons of his own wholly independent of any views of hers upon the subject.

The end of the season drew on; John Tyrrell and his sister arranged to leave London, as was their custom, early in July, and a day or two sooner Helen and Selma were to go into the country with the Cornishes. Although Tyrrell was not nominally the manager of the theatre at which he played, his importance was so great that the arrangements—when he chose them to be so—were practically in his hands, and it had come to be an established fact that he never reappeared in London professionally before November, when the new play of his season—if a new play was necessary—was produced. It was some years now since he had decided that he could well

afford, both financially and on the strength of his position, to decline to curtail his holiday for the purpose of rehearsals. He had arranged an engagement for Selma for a part in a play to be produced under his auspices, and with himself in the leading part, in the November following, and the day before she went away with the Cornishes he took her to the theatre and introduced her to the nominal manager, that the business details might be finally settled, and the contracts signed. When the short interview was over he put her at once into a cab, telling her that he should come and see her to say good-bye later in the day.

Selma was alone in the drawing-room when he arrived, and he sat down with the air of a man who was very much at home.

"Well, Selma," he said.

Selma smiled absently. She was rather grave and pale, and she did not answer him.

"How do you feel?" he said, with a smile. "How do you like Donne?"

She leant back in her chair, and, clasping her hands above her head, answered his first question.

"I feel—strange," she said, in a low, dreamy voice. "I've been feeling it more and more strongly for the last two or three weeks, and now—I can't tell you how strange I feel!"

"That is rather vague. Do you mean that Donne and business details are disenchanting?"

"No!" she answered, instantly and steadily; and then she went on, youthfully, "They are a pity, of course—like parties and people—but they are nothing really. I mean one gets through all that!"

John Tyrrell stretched out his hand, and took a rose from a bowl near him with a slight smile.

"What is it, then?" he said, as he flicked it against his other hand.

"I feel so strongly that I have come to the threshold. When I go away to-morrow, I go away from one bit of my life for ever. Next winter will be a new beginning, and—I have been happy."

John Tyrrell looked at her keenly for a moment. He seemed to take in and mentally appraise every detail of the beautiful young face and figure, every shade of expression on the sensitive features.

"Are you afraid?" he said.

"No," she answered, "I am not afraid,"

and her voice was low and vibrating. "I am ready to face anything and everything." And then she suddenly sprang to her feet, quivering with excitement. "There are so many Selmas!" she cried. "So many Selmas in this one me! When I look back I feel as though my happiest work was over, and when I look forward—oh, when I look forward all the past seems only preparation for the work before me, and I'm half wild with longing for the time to come!"

And when he said good-bye, and left her, half an hour later, the happy expectation had not faded from her eyes.

CONCERNING SOME REMARKABLE DINNERS UNDER THE STUARTS.

THOUGH James the First spent annually a much larger sum upon his cuisine than his great predecessor had spent, his banquets lacked the air of dignity or picturesqueness by which Elizabeth's had always been distinguished.

He was a gross feeder and a heavy drinker; a scrofulous, ill-compacted "body," who liked his dishes as stimulating as his wines. He brought with him to England the national predilection for such "confused eating" as haggis or cock-a-leekie, and the national prejudice against pork. But in Scotland his Majesty's table had been sparsely supplied, and with the most ordinary viands; and perhaps he acquired his gormandising habits and developed his partiality for rich dishes during his dilatory progress from Edinburgh to London on his accession to the English throne, when he may be said, almost literally, to have eaten and drunk his way to his new capital. The English nobles threw open their houses as he advanced, and made such dinners for him as in all his life he had never seen, or even imagined, before. It must be owned, however, that he showed himself an apt learner, and his table at Greenwich or Theobalds was invariably distinguished by its sumptuousness. The Duc de Sally, the French ambassador, records that he was always served on the knee, which shows that he preserved the strict etiquette of the Tudor Court.

"A sur-tout* pyramidal in form, was set," he says, "in the centre of the Royal table, which contained most costly vessels, and was even enriched with diamonds."

* Epergue.

During the visit of the King of Denmark—the Queen's father—in 1603, there was a sound of revelry every night in the Royal hall. It is no exaggeration to speak of it as one prolonged orgia.

"The sports," says Sir John Harrington, "began each day in such manner and such sort as well-nigh persuaded me of Mahomet's paradise. We had women, and, indeed, wine too, of such plenty as would have astonished each beholder. Our feasts," he goes on to say, "were magnificent, and the two Royal guests did most lovingly embrace each other at the table. I think the wine hath strangely wrought on our good English nobles, for those whom I could never get to taste good English liquor now follow the fashion, and wallow in beastly delight. The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication. In good sooth, the Parliament did kindly to provide his Majesty so seasonably with money; for there has been no lack of good living, shows, sights, and banquetings from morn to eve.

"One day a great feast was held; and after dinner the representation of Solomon's Temple and the coming of the Queen of Sheba was made, or (as I may better say) was meant to be made, before their Majesties, by decree of [Robert Cecil] the Earl of Salisbury and others. But, alas! as all earthly things do fail to poor mortals in heavenly enjoyments, so did prove our presentment thereof. The lady who did play the Queen's part did carry most precious gifts to both their Majesties; but, forgetting the steps arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesty's lap and fell at his feet, though I rather think 'twas in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion; cloths and napkins were at hand, to make all clean. His Majesty then got up, and would dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state, which was not a little defiled with the presents of the Queen, which had been bestowed on his garments; such as wine, cream, jelly, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters. The entertainment and show went forward, and most of the presenters went backward or fell down, wine did so occupy their upper chambers."

After recording some further details, which, I imagine, have been strongly coloured for the sake of effect, the author of the "Nugæ Antiquæ" observes:

"I have much marvelled at those strange pageantries; and they do bring to my remembrance what passed of this sort in our Queen's days, of which I was sometime an humble spectator and an assistant; but I never did see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety as I now have done."

James's vinous propensities were for sweet, rich liquors. Roger Coke says, he indulged "not in ordinary French and Spanish wines, but in strong Greek wines." And when he was out hunting he was always attended by a special officer, to keep his cup filled with the well-loved beverage.

"I have heard my father say," Coke adds, "that, hunting with the King, after the King had drunk of the wine, he also drank of it, and though he was young and of a healthful disposition, it so deranged his head that it spoiled his pleasure and disordered him for three days after. Whether it was from drinking these wines, or from some other cause, the King became so lazy and so unwieldy that he was trussed on horseback, and, as he was set, so would he ride, without stirring himself in the saddle; nay, when his hat was set upon his head, he would not take the trouble to alter it, but it sate as it was put on."

Of the wines in vogue in James's reign we may form a tolerably correct idea from the inventory of the stock-in-trade of a tavern called the ["Bull and"] "Mouth," Bishopgate Without, in 1612—first printed in volume fifty-eight of the "Gentleman's Magazine"—the cellar of which contained: "Four pipes of white wine, two hogs heads of old Graves wine—vin de Graves—seven hogsheads of Orleans wine, one butt of Malaga, one runlet of Sherris Sack, three-quarters of a pipe of old Malmsey, one-third of a butt of ditto, three gallons of Alicant, half a pipe of Malaga, one hogshead of old Claret, one hogshead of Graves wine, half a hogshead of Orleans white wine, half a hogshead of Graves claret, one-third part of a hogshead of red wine, three pipes of Rochelle."

There is no mention here of Greek wines, but they were very costly, and drank only by the few.

According to Waldon, James drank Frontignac, Canary, Tent wine, and Scottish ale, the last as potent a liquor, perhaps, as any vintage of Greece or the Canaries. By the way, Ben Jonson shared his Sovereign's liking for strong wines. He is described as

drinking "seas of Canary*" at the "Mermaid," then staggering home to bed, and, after a proper sweat, arising to his dramatic work.

One day, after dining well, but not wisely, at Theobalds, James went out on horseback. Whether it was the rider's fault or the animal's, his horse stumbl'd and threw the King into the New River, which ran through the park. Sir Richard Young plunged into the water, and seizing Majesty by the boots, the only parts visible, dragged him ashore not much the worse for his involuntary bath.

James's regularity in his meals and dishes was so excessive that one of his courtiers jestingly remarked, if he were to wake up out of a seven years' sleep, he would not only be able to tell where the King had been every day, but what he had had for dinner. One of his weaknesses—and he had a good many—was for fruit, and he always finished a hearty dinner with as hearty a dessert. Bishop Goodman intimates that he indulged in this to an excess.

"He had his grapes," he says, "his nectarines, and other fruits, in his own keeping; besides, we did see that he fed very plentifully on them from abroad. I remember that Mr. French of the Spicery, who sometimes did present him with the first strawberries, cherries, and other fruits, and kneeling to the King, had some speech to use to him; that he did desire his Majesty to accept them, and that he was sorry they were no better, with such like complimentary words; but the King never had the patience to hear him one word, but his hand was in the basket."

His great minister, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, was equally immoderate as a fruit-eater, and especially of grapes. Cecil maintained at Hatfield, which he had received from James in exchange for Theobalds, a sumptuous hospitality, and frequently received his Sovereign there. James's superb State bedroom is still preserved with all its original furniture intact.

One of the most splendid—and shameful—dinners in James's reign was that given by the Corporation of London in honour of the marriage of Carr, Earl of Somerset—James's favourite—to the notorious

Frances Howard, on her divorce from the Earl of Essex. All the circumstances of this ill-omened alliance were so disgraceful, that one wonders that the civic magnates did not shrink from any recognition of it; but, on the contrary, they exhausted their resources to make the occasion one of exceptional splendour. The dinner was on the most gorgeous scale, and was attended not only by the bride and bridegroom, but by the Duke of Lennox, the Lord Privy-Seal, the Lord Chamberlain, and a large number of the nobility. The dishes were served by the principal citizens from the twelve City guilds. After the feast followed dramatic performances, dances, and a masque, the revel concluding with a second banquet; and all because a dissolute young courtier had married an abandoned woman!

Another notable dinner—for a different reason—was one at which the Prince of Orange played the host, and gallant James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, was the principal guest. The Earl was returning through Holland from his French embassy, and on reaching Amsterdam, necessarily paid a visit to the Prince. The Prince, of course, invited him to dinner; whereupon one of his officials suggested to the Prince, who was abstemious in his habits, and sparing of outlay, that for so brilliant a visitor the bill of fare should be improved. He assented, called for the programme, and observing that only one pig was set down, ordered his steward to cook another. As the prejudice of the Scots against pork was well known, the Prince probably intended a covert satire on Lord Carlisle's usual ostentation. He spent more on his diet, even, than on his dress—which is saying much—and invented many new and costly dishes. In fact, he may justly be called the English Lucullus. He once gave a dinner to the French Ambassador, at which were served "fish of that immensity brought out of Muscovy"—probably sturgeon—"that dishes had to be specially manufactured to contain them." This was followed by a masque, in which nobles and gentles were the performers, and this by a costly and magnificent banquet, the King, lords, and all the "prime gentlemen" therein or about London being among the guests.

Francis Osborne can hardly be accepted as an historian of the Court and Times of James the First, but there is no reason to suspect him of exaggeration in the following passage:

* Sir John Suckling, in his "Session of the Poets," alludes to Jonson's partiality:

The first that broke silence was good old Ben,
Prepared before with Canary wine.

"The Earl of Carlisle," he says, "was one of the quorum that brought in the vanity of ante-suppers,* not heard of in our forefathers' time, and for aught I have read, or at least remember, unpractised by the most luxurious tyrants. The manner of which was to have the board covered, at the first entrance of the guests, with dishes as high as a tall man could well reach, and dearest viands sea or land could afford; and all this once seen, and having feasted the eyes of the invited, was in a manner thrown away, and fish set in the same height, having only this advantage of the other, that it was hot. I cannot forget one of the attendants of the King, that, at a feast made by this monster of excess, ate to his single share a whole pie, reckoned to my lord at £10, being composed of ambergris, magisterial of pearl, musk, etc. And yet, after such suppers, and huge banquets no less profuse, a waiter returning his servant home with a cloak-bag full of dried sweetmeats and comforts, valued to his lordship at more than 10s. the pound. I am cloyed," adds the annalist, "with the repetition of this excess, no less than scandalised with the continuance of it."

The dinners of Lord Bacon—I use the popular though erroneous designation, sanctioned by centuries of usage—were marked, no doubt, by the sumptuousness of taste which was one of his characteristics. It is recorded by Aubrey that he loved to have his dinner-table strewn with sweet flowers and herbs, which he said "did refresh his spirits and memory." This may well be credited; but I find it difficult to believe that he was so deficient of perception as to sit absorbed at the upper end of his table while his servants robbed him audaciously at the bottom. His dinners at Gorhambury, where he had reared a noble mansion, must have been delightful—not only in the refinement and elegance which would govern the arrangements of the feast, but in the intellectual talk which Bacon and the few choice spirits he invited to his rural retreat, must have so brightly and easily maintained. At York House, his guests were the statesmen, courtiers, and public personages of the day, whom his position compelled him to invite, and there would be an air of reserve and reticence never known among the woods of

Hertfordshire, when Ben Jonson, and Selden, and Hobbes, Sir Henry Saville, and Sir Robert Cotton were privileged to sit at his table.

Among the memorable dinners in James the First's reign, I may allude to the grand banquet given at Hatton House by Lady Hatton, the second wife of Chief Justice Coke, with whom she had quarrelled desperately, on November the eighth, 1617. Its magnificence was the talk of all London. Buckingham was there, and Bacon, and James himself, who, when he accepted the invitation, expressed a hope that she would agree to a reconciliation with her husband. She replied—says Gardiner—that if Coke came in at one door, she would walk out at the other; and forbade her servants to admit either her husband or any of his sons. Her anxiety was needless, Coke sitting quietly at home in his chambers at the Temple, while the King and the remainder of his wife's guests were making merry at Hatton House. So well pleased was James with the dinner and the wine, that he knighted four of Lady Hatton's friends in the course of the evening, and bestowed upon herself half-a-dozen kisses when taking his leave.

The intemperance which had disgraced the Court in James's reign was followed, under Charles the First, by a régime of moderation and decency.* Charles's natural refinement, and his gravity of disposition, inclined him to look with disgust upon every form of excess; and his Queen, with her French vivacity and grace, was by no means disposed to countenance or condone the offences against good taste and good manners, which had never discomposed the coarse temper of Anne of Denmark, though she allowed a gay freedom at times that her husband's austerity could not endure.

A strange spectacle was that public dinner, soon after Charles's marriage, when the impetuous girl—she was but fifteen—"the room being somewhat overheated with the fire and company, with one frown drove them all out of the chamber. I suppose," says Meade, "none but a Queen could have cast such a scowl." I fancy I see the courtiers, and the curious spectators who had come to Whitehall—as was

* The invention of the double dinner, or double supper, was Hay's own.

* This is admitted by Mrs. Hutchinson: "The face of the Court," she says, "was much changed in the change of the King; for King Charles was temperate, chaste, and serious, so that the fools, mimics, and catamites of the former Court grew out of fashion."

then the custom—to see their Sovereigns at dinner, stumbling backward pell-mell out of the banqueting-room to escape the angry glances of her “radiant and sparkling black eye!” Still stranger the spectacle at another dinner, not long afterwards, when the Queen’s confessor audaciously placed himself by the side of the King’s chaplain, and when the latter began to say grace, chimed in with a Latin benediction, until the irate chaplain forcibly thrust him away. The priest then went round to the Queen’s side, and resumed his formula, endeavouring to outvoice his Anglican rival, until the King ended the unseemly competition by drawing one of the dishes towards him, and signing to the carvers to attend to their duties. After dinner, chaplain and confessor renewed their contest over the thanksgiving, so that Charles abruptly rose, took his wife’s hand, and withdrew from the scene.

It was after a public dinner at Whitehall, July the thirty-first, 1626, that Charles retired with Henrietta into her private apartment, and informed her that her French servants, who had been the cause of innumerable quarrels, must return to France; and meanwhile the yeomen of the guard were busily compelling them to leave the Palace. As soon as the young Queen became aware of their compulsory departure, she flew to the window, and broke the panes that her voice might once more be heard by those from whom she was being separated. Charles, it is said, dragged her back with her hands bleeding from the effects of her energetic action.

At his dinner, as always, Charles was a great stickler for etiquette. The dishes were served by the grooms of the chamber and other gentlemen; the “taster” made assay of the meats that no poison might lurk in them undetected; and the cup was presented on the knee. The public banquets at Whitehall were long and tedious functions; but Charles never suffered a single detail to be omitted. He himself, however, ate but sparingly, and seldom of more than two or three dishes. His faithful attendant, Herbert, says: “He drank but twice every dinner and supper, once of beer, and once of wine and water mixed, only after fish a glass of French wine; the beverage he himself mixed at the cupboard as he would have it; he very seldom ate and drank before dinner, nor between meals.” He continued to dine in public throughout the trials and troubles of his later reign. When virtually a

prisoner in the hands of the army leaders at Hampton Court, he dined in the Presence Chamber, with the same duties and ceremonies as heretofore, and many of the gentry were admitted to kiss his hand. Even when he was at Carisbrook, the ceremonial and punctilios of a Court were preserved; and on his removal to Saint James’s, a few weeks before his trial, he was treated at first with the same regard to his exalted rank. He still dined in public, and was waited on by the gentlemen of his household. But, after a few days, the army leaders ordered that all State ceremonial should be dropped, and reduced the number of his domestics, and of the dishes supplied to his table. When the limited meal was first served by common soldiers, the King remarked, with a sigh:

“There is nothing more contemptible than a despised Prince.”

Thenceforward he caused his food to be conveyed into his own chamber, and partook of it in private. On the last day of his life, two or three dishes had been supplied for his dinner, but he refused to take anything except a piece of bread and a glass of claret.

The table of Oliver Cromwell, when Lord Protector, was remarkable for its dignified simplicity. The old etiquette of royalty was not preserved; but everything was done decently and in order, and with due recognition of his high position as head of the State. That he could unbend with guests, whom he knew would not abuse his familiarity, is beyond doubt; as also, that, at times, he yielded to a somewhat rough humour, and would withdraw with his intimate friends to his private apartments, and call—as Whitelocke tells us—for tobacco, pipes, and a candle; but that he was guilty of the buffoonery attributed to him by Royalist libellers, I decline to believe. The story, told by Bates, that he would often make feasts for his inferior officers, and, while they were feeding—even before they had satisfied their hunger—cause the drums to beat and let in the private soldiers to carry away the half-eaten dishes, may possibly be true of Oliver the General, but not of Oliver the Lord Protector. And we may unhesitatingly reject as a fiction the incident related in a contemporary pamphlet, quoted by Mr. Jesse, that, at one of his public dinners, while the sweetmeats were being served, a lady present among the spectators desired Colonel Pride, who was sitting at Cromwell’s table, to hand her some candied

apricots. The Colonel, it is said, replied by throwing into her apron a conserve of wet sweetmeats; whereupon Cromwell caught up his napkin and threw it at Pride, who retaliated, and, presently, all at Cromwell's table were similarly engaged; until "the noise made the members rise before the sweetmeats were set down, believing dinner was done, go to this pastime of gambols, and be spectators of his Highness's frolics."

The true character of the Lord Protector's entertainments may be gathered from the following record:

"The Lord Ambassadors of the United Provinces this day (April 27) dined with his Highness the Lord Protector at Whitehall, and the Lords of the Council, with some Colonels and other gentlemen, at two tables in the same room; and the Lords Ambassadors, the Lord President, and the Lord Rich at the same table with his Highness; and twenty gentlemen were taken into his Highness's life-guards of foot (the whole number is to be three score) who carried up the meat, and many gentlemen attended; and after dinner there was a banquet [concert]. The coats of the guards are grey cloth, with black velvet collars, and silver lace and trimming."

Occasionally his Highness received the members of his House of Commons in "the Banqueting House at Whitehall." He also kept an open table every Monday, for the officers of his army who had attained the rank of captain; and a smaller table was served every day for such officers as might desire to pay him their respects. Among the guests whom he delighted to receive in his private house were Milton, Marvell, and Edmund Waller.

Of Milton it is recorded that he was abstemious in his diet; he drank very little wine, and "fed without any luxurious delicacy of choice." He dined about one or two o'clock. At least, his biographers say that after breakfast he studied till twelve; then took exercise for an hour in his garden; and afterwards dined. He was fond of olives, and did not object to a pipe of tobacco. Though thus frugal in his own practice, he could frame a magnificent banquet in imagination, as when Eve prepares dinner for the angel Raphael.

Marvell, another of Cromwell's favourite companions, lived on the most meagre fare. When he did not get his plate of meat and vegetables at Haycock's Ordinary, in the

Strand, he dined at home, as everybody knows, on a leg of mutton bone, and contemptuously rejected the bribes of Charles the Second, which would have enabled him to live less sparingly. At this time it was the practice of not a few to take their ease at an inn, and dine off such wholesome plain dishes as honest Boniface provided. They liked the company and—the economy. Thus, Isaac Walton, of piscatorial memory, was accustomed to dine very frequently at the "Swan," at Tottenham High Cross, where the ale was good—"a drink like nectar," he pronounced it, "too good, indeed, for anybody but us anglers"—and, no doubt, the fish cooked to a turn.

Of Waller, Cromwell's third post-guest, it is enough to say that he was well-to-do, and we may assume, therefore, that his table was liberally spread. Aubrey tells us that he was always very temperate, except on one occasion, when some boon companions "made him damnable drunk at Somerset House, where at the water-stairs he fell down and had a cruel fall. 'Twas a pity to use such a sweet swan so inhumanly." It was!

There was no want of feasting at Whitehall in the days of the second Charles—feasting of a somewhat harum-scarum and graceless complexion, in strong contrast to the sober dignity of Cromwell's entertainments and the rigid etiquette of Charles the First's. Royalist writers might ill-naturedly comment on the alleged buffooneries of the great Protector; but, after all, had they been as coarse as represented, they were to be preferred to the vulgar jests and gross indecencies in which the so-called "Merry Monarch" took a part. There was very little fun, surely, while there was obvious impropriety, in the King of England's stooping to make his guest, William of Orange, the suitor of his niece, "drink very hard." The heavy Dutchman, as Evelyn calls him, was naturally abstemious; and the strong drink so influenced his unaccustomed brain, that "the mind took him to break the windows of the chambers of the maids of honour; and he had got into their apartments had they not been timely rescued."

When the King dined at the Guildhall with the Lord Mayor, Sir Robert Viner, and the Aldermen, he drank himself down to their level, and, by-and-by, all went off to Whitehall together, where there was more drinking, and much protestation of

unalterable fidelity on the one side, and Royal good-will on the other. After a hunting-party, on one occasion, he and his companions came—says Pepys—to Sir George Carteret's house at Cranbourne, and there were entertained, and "all made drunk; and, being all drunk, Armerer did come to the King, and swear to him:

"'Sir!' says he, 'you are not so kind to the Duke of York of late as you used to be.'

"'Not I!' says the King. 'Why so?'"

"'Why,' says he, 'if you are, let us drink his health!'"

"'Why, let us,' says the King.

"Then he—Armerer—fell on his knees and drank it; and having done, the King began to drink it.

"'Nay, sir,' says Armerer; 'you must do it on your knees!'"

"So he did, and then all the company; and having done it, all fell a crying for joy, being all maudlin and kissing one another—the King the Duke of York, and the Duke of York the King; and in such a maudlin pickle as never people were."

In later years Charles often dined with the beautiful Duchess of Mazarin, in her house at Chelsea, where there was more refinement and external decorum.

"Every one," writes Saint Evremont, "is made more at home than in his own house, and treated with more respect than at Court. There is play, but it is inconsiderable, and only practised for its amusement. Play is followed by the most excellent repasts in the world. There you will find whatever delicacy is brought from France, and whatever is curious from the Indies. Even the commonest meats have the rarest relish imparted to them. There is neither the profuseness which suggests extravagance, nor the frugality that betrays penury or meanness."

"I dined with my wife upon a most excellent dish of tripes of my own directing, covered with mustard, as I have heretofore seen them done at my Lord Crewe's, of which I made a very great meal, and sent for a glass of wine for myself." (!) The reader will immediately recognise this naive confession of selfishness as extracted from "Mr. Samuel Pepys: His Diary," in the evergreen pages of which numerous interesting records occur of dinners eaten and enjoyed—or otherwise. Pepys could

appreciate a good dinner, whether of tripe or turtle, but had not a soul large enough to forgive a bad one. "My wife and I all alone," he writes, one Sunday evening, "to a leg of mutton, the sauce of which being made sweet, I was angry at it, and ate none, but only dined upon the marrow-bone that we had beside."

When he took his wife, and the two maids, and the boy to the New Spring Gardens, all five dined at "an ordinary" on cakes, and powdered beef, and ale; but very different was the fare on a certain April the fourth—"his own feast," he calls it—when he was "very merry at, before, and after dinner." "The course for that very dinner," he says, "was great, and most neatly dressed by our own only maid. We had a fricassee of rabbits and chickens, a leg of mutton boiled, three carps in a dish, a great dish of a side of lamb, a dish of roasted pigeons, a dish of fine lobsters, three tarts, a lamprey pie, a most rare pie, a dish of anchovies, good wine of several sorts, and all things mighty noble, and to my great content."

Well, if his appetite had not been satisfied with such fare as this, he would have deserved to have been dieted for three months on bread and water!

Pepys, let me add, was a great patron of the London taverns.

"At noon, with my wife by appointment, to dinner at the 'Dolphin,' with Sir W. Batten, and his lady and daughter, Matt, and Captain Cook and his lady, a German lady, but a very great beauty, and we dined together, at the spending of some wagers lost between him and I; and then we had the best musique and very good songs, and were very merry and danced. But, after all now come a reckoning of £4, besides 4s. of the musicians which did trouble us, but it must be paid, and so I took my leave and left them there about eight o'clock."

"We all went to the 'Three Cranes Tavern,' though the best room in the house is such a narrow dog-hole that it made me loathe my company and victuals, and a sorry poor dinner it was, too."

"To a little ordinary in Hercules' Pillar Alley, the 'Crown,' a poor sorry place, and there dined, and had a good dinner."

"Thence by water to the Temple, and then to the 'Cock' alehouse, and drank, and ate a lobster, and sang and were mighty merry."

"Did walk to the 'Cock,' at the end of Suffolk Street, where I never was, a great

ordinary mightily cried up, and there bespoke a pullet, and while [it was] dressing [my friend] and I walked into St. James's Park, and thence back, and dined very handsome, with a good soup and a pullet for 4s. 6d. the whole."

[It was at the "Cock" that Wycherley, the dramatist, was allowed by his imperious wife, the Countess of Drogheda, to enjoy an occasional dinner with the friends of his gay bachelorhood; though "on such occasions the windows were always open, in order that her ladyship, who was posted on the other side of the street, might be satisfied that no woman was of the party."]

On one occasion, the sad dog took pretty Mrs. Knipp, the actress, and his friends Mr. and Mrs. Pierce, to a tavern in Old Fish Street, "to the very house and woman where I kept my wedding dinner, where I never was since, and then I did give them a jole of salmon, and what else was to be had."

The gastronomic tastes of Queen Anne, and of her dull, good-natured consort, Prince George, were quite English; both were partial to the solid joint—the sirloin of beef, the leg of mutton, the fillet of veal. The Queen, it is said, drank a good deal more than was queenly. To her love of "victuals and drink" must be attributed, no doubt, the obese bulk and gouty habit which necessitated her being carried in an arm-chair in the procession at her coronation; she could not walk. Coke says:

"Her life would have lasted longer if she had not eaten so much—a propensity not derived from her father, King James, who was most abstemious, but from her mother—Anne Hyde, who inherited it, perhaps, from her father, Lord Clarendon."

Queen Anne's dinner-hour was three in the afternoon. When King Charles of Spain visited her, in December, 1703, the meal would seem to have been protracted until it was nearly time for supper. The Royal visitor, on this occasion, prevailed on the Duchess of Marlborough to relinquish to him the napkin, which it was her office to present to the Queen, and he held it for her Majesty with much courteous homage. The banqueting-hall at Kensington was built by Queen Anne, and it was there she gave her state entertainments. As Hyde Park then extended to the broad walk which runs from Bayswater to Kensington, the public would crowd up to the grille that divided it from the Royal gardens, and enjoy the glorious sight of her Majesty at dinner—admiring with open-

mouthed wonder the brilliant dresses of her guests, who afterwards took the air "in brocaded robes, hoops, fly-caps, and fans," or in bag-wigs, square-cut coats, breeches, silk stockings, and ruff's.

THE SURREY SIDE.

BOROUGH HIGH STREET.

THERE is an individuality about the Borough High Street, transmitted from ancient days and still surviving, which marks it out as one of the famous streets of the world—of the world of London, anyhow. It has no great architectural features, but shows a homely, comfortable cheerfulness in its red-brick shop-fronts, its banks, and warehouses, and public buildings, with something of the air of the principal street of some important country town. At night, especially when the shopkeepers are putting up their shutters, and the street lamps indicate not too brilliantly the contour of the street and its curve towards London Bridge, with tall, dark buildings rising here and there among the lowlier shop-fronts, and gloomy archways opening into sombre inn-yards; while loaded waggons rumble along, and an omnibus rattles round the corner, with something of the bustle of the Kentish Mail or the Maidstone Flying Express of other days; then at such a moment and under such an aspect the old Borough High Street reasserts itself.

It is the High Street of Mr. Pickwick's period, when Sam Weller polished the boots of the guests who reposed in the galleried chambers of the old "White Hart." It is the High Street of the high-tilted waggons, and carriers' vans, and heavy stages, that brought up the corn sacks, the fragrant hop-pockets, the blue-eyed maid, the wondering rustics, the stout yeoman, the grey-coated clothiers, brought them to the Borough and left them there, where there was a pleasant, homely welcome for such in many a jovial hostelry; while everywhere the countryman was regaled with the hoppy, malty flavour of his own market town.

In the morning, too—the early morning, before the loaded cars and omnibuses are bringing up their crowds of city clerks—it is pleasant rambling about the Borough High Street, when the morning sun throws patches of radiance about the old inn-yards, and lights up some dim, forgotten court, where a few old, gabled houses, or quaint,

weather-beaten tenements have been spared to gladden our eyes. Not much has been spared. The railways have not only killed the old-fashioned traffic, but they have also taken possession, and have established their receiving-houses in the old inn-yards. But interesting vestiges still remain. The old "George" is still in existence, perhaps the very oldest inn in the country, kept up as a going concern from the days of the Plantagenets, and there is a fragment remaining of the balustraded gallery giving access to the inn chambers, such as once stretched along either side of the inn-yard. There is the "Queen's Head," too, with a double gallery, one above the other, although in one the balustrading has been replaced by ironwork; and here is a famous projecting bar and coffee room, which gives us the genuine aspect of the inn yard of the olden time. By good luck there is actually in this year of grace, 1891, a carrier's cart making ready to depart for a journey to Godstone, in Kent, just as it might have been doing a hundred years ago. The "Half Moon," too, still retains a good deal of its ancient and quaint appearance.

These are what remain; but the losses have been great. The "White Hart" yard is gone, famous not only for Weller, but for Jack Cade, who had his headquarters here, as Shakespeare tells us and the chronicles; yet a renovated fragment of the old house still exists as a tavern. And the "Tabard," most illustrious of inns, which the genius of Chaucer has rendered spiritually immortal, has suffered such changes in its corporeal tenement, as to be no longer recognisable for the trysting place of the Canterbury Pilgrims. Yet the structure of the High Street, with all its long courts or wynds, approached by arched openings from the street, all of which have been inns or hostleries in the olden time, is a direct result of the martyrdom of Becket, and the tardy penitence of the English King. For the popularity of the shrine of Saint Thomas brought such crowds of people along this the chief route from London and all the northern part of England to the holy shrine, that these huge caravanserais, with their multifarious chambers, sprung up everywhere at the point of departure about the Borough. Many of the great abbays, too, of the south and west, had their hostels for the accommodation of the Abbot and such of the brethren as might have occasion to visit London; and these houses also

let off to regular innkeepers. Thus the old "Tabard," antiquarians tell us, was the hostel of the Abbot of Hyde, and the jolly host, whom Chaucer depicts with such gusto, was doubtless the Abbot's tenant.

A plan of Southwark, taken shortly after the Reformation, shows us all the existing inns of the Borough, and many more aligned at right angles to the street, and nearly all on the left-hand or eastern side as at present. But the street was much wider then, the line of houses on the right-hand side being wanting, and the ground occupied by closes containing scattered dwellings, and brewhouses, for the Southwark ale was always famous, and by the gateways of the great mansions of the Bishop of Winchester and the Duke of Suffolk. And "High Street" it is not yet, but Long Southwark, with a pillory standing in the midst of the road, at the point where the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction ended, and beyond that a bull-ring, where the road widened still more, and was known as Saint Margaret's Hill. Saint Margaret's Church disappeared long ago, as when the priory of Saint Mary Overy was dissolved the parishes of Saint Mary and Saint Margaret were united, with the noble church of the priory as the parish church, henceforth to be known as Saint Saviour's. But the town hall of the present day is probably built on the site of Saint Margaret's, and not far from the bull-ring.

It would have astonished the worthies of old Southwark not a little to have beheld their ancient borough invaded by strangers, approaching neither by Kent Street, nor Saint George's Fields, nor by the well-known route over London Bridge; but rising out of the ground, and going about their business as if they had done nothing out of the common way. Yet in this fashion let us enter Southwark on this particular morning, with the rough, March winds sweeping over London Bridge, and bringing up the tide, and the argosies thereon in full swing, while it tosses about the horses' tails and manes, and brings the coat collars of the carmen and busmen up to their ears, while it sets all their idle comrades to flap and beat themselves vigorously to keep up the circulation. Let us enter Southwark by means of the Electric Railway, and find ourselves at Southwark fair, for such for the moment one may fancy the scene to be, with Saint George's Church in the foreground, the cords for the rope-dancers

stretched across the open area in front—they are telegraph or telephone wires perhaps, but the illusion is there all the same, and a busy crowd passing to and fro.

It might be about the year 1728, when Fielding and Reynolds had their "great theatrical booth, at the lower end of Blue Maid Alley on the green in Southwark during the fair. The 'Beggar's Opera' as at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Coaches to the 'Half Moon Inn.'" But if we cannot assist at the "Beggar's Opera" we may identify the site of Fielding's, the great Henry's, booth. The "Blue Maid" has been poetically transformed into the "Blue-eyed Maid," which is as pretty a sign for a little tavern as one could wish; but there she is, anyhow, with the alley at the back; but we may look in vain for the green. There is the "Half Moon," however, much as it may have looked in Fielding's time, and you may fancy the gilt coaches, lurching through the narrow inn-yard, and the patched and powdered dames within, for it was the fashion then to frolic in Southwark fair.

Hogarth's "Southwark Fair," again, is later, about 1734; but there is an old weather-boarded dwelling opposite the church, with the South Western Railway in possession, but once an inn, and probably the "Catherine Wheel" which may be the one where the comedians are tumbling from the broken stage. And the church is always there—the snug, red-brick church, with the Corinthian columns in front and the florid brickwork at the other end, quite Hogarthian in feeling, though the artist seems to have taken his sketch from the old church just then pulled down. And round about the church is the old graveyard, now a pleasant garden with shrubs and trees just sprouting out in delicate green, which contrasts with the dingy brickwork all round, and with the death-heads and cross-bones, and the skeletons and coffins that appear upon the old tombstones planted against the wall; and still more with a solitary old brick tomb, big enough for a mausoleum, with the following epitaph—candid if not consolatory—

How lov'd how valu'd once avails thee not,
To whom related or by whom forgot;
A heap of Dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art and all the Proud shall be.

It may very well happen at the present day that the Proud—with a capital P—will not be present in large numbers to cull the moral lesson of a tombstone in Saint George's churchyard. They do not live, as

a rule, in Kent Street, where the broom-makers used to dwell, and cut their besoms in Saye's Court Wood hard by.

He was old and he dwelt in a wood,
And his trade it was making of broom.

And the broom-maker would not be abashed by fine company in Kent Street even now, which is a very dismal kind of thoroughfare, although, as its name denotes, it was once the great highway into the "Garden of England"; but Great Dover Street is now its thriving representative in that capacity; nor yet in the Mint, which opens out just opposite, although Mint Street has now become Marshalsea Street, in memory of the Debtors' Prison which stood there once, in virtue of the privileges and powers of the Marshal of the Palace of Whitehall.

Wat Tyler's people, by-the-way, dragged the Marshal out of sanctuary and hanged him, which showed the estimation in which that functionary was held among the lower orders. But the Marshalsea continued to exist as a great debtors' prison down to living memory; as did the King's Bench Prison opposite, now represented by Layton's Buildings, among which some fragments of the old prison may be found. But the prison brought many gay people to Southwark, who lived within the rules.

Over yonder is Lant Street, which will be remembered as the scene of Bob Sawyer's supper-party in "Pickwick," which seems to have held its own pretty well ever since, although now going into the machine-making and ironfounding line, while its dingy houses, although medical students might still find lodgings there, seem more in the way of overlookers and foremen of works. There is Long Lane again on the other side of the church, that stretches along, not without a turning, towards Bermondsey and the hide and skin market. But all these streets and lanes find a central point about Saint George's Church, where there are still vestiges of the open space in which the fair was held. And although nearly a century has elapsed since the fair was abolished, a tradition of it seems to linger in the minds of showmen, for there is nearly always some kind of a show in the neighbourhood—it may be a fat woman, or a giant, or performing dogs and monkeys, or, as to-day, an exhibition of mechanical wonders, with waxwork figures and a little mystery and marvel thrown in. It is a very harmless affair—admission

only a penny; and the mechanical wonders consist of stirring scenes and battlefields, the figures provided with moveable heads and limbs in cardboard, which nod and jerk intermittently as the machines are wound up and run down. There is a magic mirror in the corner, lately arrived from Paris, where any one may see the features of their "intended" for the small charge of a penny. A youth is bold enough to try his fate, and a little crowd gathers about him, vaguely expectant of signs and wonders. But he doesn't see anything.

"Oh, wait a bit," cries the bright-eyed damsel in charge of the oracle of fate; "the lamp's not lit yet." And she artlessly runs to light the mystic flame at a neighbouring gas-jet. And now the young man sees something, doubtless; but it is not the face of Mary Anne, but of a stranger; and thus things are left in uncertainty.

There is still a slight flavour of Alsatia about the Mint, where Suffolk Street recalls the memory of that Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who had his mansion there, which eventually came to the King, who set up a mint there. And from the privileges of this quasi Palace, the district came to be regarded as a sanctuary for debtors. And the history is related of one Thomas Jones, a bankrupt brewer, who surreptitiously removed his stock-in-trade to the precincts of the Mint, where it was enthusiastically received by the inhabitants, defying creditors or lawyers to remove it. But the Commissioners of Bankruptcy were on their mettle; they issued their warrant, and backed it with a body of twenty-one constables. And the united force of the constables proved too much for the irregular onslaughts of the denizens of the Mint. Though they could not capture the man, they carried off the beer; and from this moment Mr. Jones's popularity visibly declined. But although the Mint long had an evil reputation, and was till lately inhabited by some of the most lawless of London roughs, yet the neighbourhood is now greatly altered. Great blocks of model dwellings have replaced the narrow, tortuous lanes and courts of the old Mint, and an industrious population, connected with the works and factories of the district, is replacing the wilder inhabitants of the Mint.

Beyond Saint George's Church, to the south, was open country in Hogarth's time, as his picture shows meadows and

marshes, through which the raised footway, known as the Causeway, afforded solid footing as far as Newington. But at the church the interest of the High Street ends, and all beyond is commonplace. The true character of the Borough is to be found among its hop-warehouses and exchanges on one side, and in busy Tooley Street on the other, with the wharves and stairs along Thames side, where the traffic of a great port is carried on in narrow lanes and alleys. But the limits of this paper have been reached, and all this must be left for another occasion.

ABOUT BEARDS.

LIKE all other excellent things—except mushrooms—the beard does not spring up in a single night. In its transitional stage, it is not altogether a thing of beauty. The man then feels that he is hardly fit for the society of his fellow creatures. If only, like Rip Van Winkle, he could skip over the intervening weeks and months, and return to vigorous and social life fully equipped with the appendage he sighs for! But that is impossible. He has many humiliating moments to endure ere the time of his dignity has come. And it is just conceivable that when he is duly bearded like the pard, he still retains such a recollection of the slights he has suffered in quest of his ambition, that pique makes him dissatisfied with the reality. For it is often with beards as with the other goals towards which we aspire: the pleasure lies mainly in expectation. Happily, the barber will, in a trice, be able to set his petitioner yet again at the foot of the ladder which he has been so long in scaling.

There is no doubt about it—a beard does give an air of strength and maturity to many, if not most, of its votaries. The mother whose son has been travelling, and whose laziness has let his razors rust, is for the moment taken aback by the sight of him with a beard. It is one thing to be the mother of a son with a moustache only; but it is like being promoted from the rank of mother to that of grandmother to have a bearded son.

Men who are not very sure of their powers of self-control may respectfully be counselled to take such help in this matter as a beard will give them. Of course, it will not pretend to put their passions and weaknesses in chains for ever and a day.

Oh dear no! But it is something for those who have to battle with a world in which outward appearances are so very influential that they may rely upon their beards to hide that tell-tale part of them—the mouth. It is not a heinous sin—this inability to keep the lips from showing which way the winds of impulse tend—but it often handicaps the man in intercourse with other men who have more iron and steel in their mental constitution than he has.

Women, they are told, require no beards, because they are such admirable dissemblers—born actors all of them. But this is jumping to a very distant, and not quite acceptable, conclusion. I, for myself, should as readily suppose that our beards were meant to shield us from sore throats, as to give us the privilege of lying or dissimulating to our heart's content.

Besides, have we not all known or met, at one time or another, women with as much beard as some men are ever blessed with? An accident, perhaps. Yet if so, the above supposititious rule ought to have a hand in it. And yet the bearded women whom I, for one, have known, were not distinguished for their inability to conceal the real emotions of their minds.

The most notable instance of a bearded woman that I recall was in Sicily. I had left Catania to walk to Nicolosi, purposing the next day to climb Mount Etna. On the way, in the village of Mascalcucia, I came face to face with the phenomenon. It was really a very respectable beard, perhaps two inches long, and grey, because its bearer bore marks of age. The dame herself was dressed in dull colours. But for her beard, you would not have noticed her. Urged by curiosity, and a genuine desire for information, I stopped and asked her if I was on the right road for Nicolosi. She confirmed me in my belief in a sufficiently gentle voice, and with an engaging feminine manner. Certainly I should not have judged that she lacked the composure which would make a beard unnecessary. For all that, when my back was turned, I heard her comment upon my personal appearance to a neighbour in a tone so different from the other, that I should have thought it was a fresh individual's voice, had I not turned round and convinced myself. I should much have liked to have seen this old lady's husband, if she possessed one. Had Nature, in their case, given the woman the

advantage altogether? Further, if they had children, were the daughters' chins smooth and round, like conventional maiden chins, or did their owners sigh to introduce them to the cold steel of the razor?

In the beginning, there can be no doubt that it was the fashion to wear the beard just as long as it would grow. Methuselah must have had a remarkable beard, though, as he lived in a comparatively advanced epoch of human life, we cannot say whether or not he wore it in its natural plenitude. It were curious to trace the vicissitudes of the thing among the different nations and people of the world; but much time and learned investigation would be required. "Some people, among others the Turks, cut the hair off their heads, and let their beards grow. The Europeans, on the contrary, shave their beards and wear their hair. The American savages pluck the hairs off their beards, but are proud of those on the head, etc." So far Buffon. Since Buffon's time, however, we have almost killed off all our American savages, and those that survive, at least in North America, are not so particular about their toilet as they used to be. Shaven Turks, moreover, are not rarities nowadays. Nor do we Europeans as a body fight against the beard, though we certainly do our best to keep our natural hair upon our heads.

What a vast difference there is between one beard and another! There is the long, untrammelled beard, broad and thick, which the owner caresses as if it were an infant. Men with such beards may, I think, as a rule, be trusted rather more than other men. Can you imagine a Venetian Doge or a Member of the Council of Ten without a beard? I cannot. If you have seen a man of mark fondle his long beard during the processes of reflection, you will be apt to wonder whether or not his mind would lose its equilibrium if he were in the night to be clean shaven.

On the other hand, what of the trim little tuft that our friends of southern Europe and France still affect when they consent at all to the woollings of the unbegotten beard that is in them? You might be willing enough to believe that the wearers of such tortured shadows of a beard had in like manner coerced their better consciousness. Are they likely to be at the service of the virtues which dwell within them? By no

means wholly. Even as they prune their beard after the fashionable model, so you may perhaps feel sure they will cut and trim their conduct that it may be no better and perhaps no worse than that of their fellow men.

A long, wide-spreading beard is in itself a certificate of character. That is why you see it on the chins of the arch-mendicants of our metropolises.

Not so the other kinds of beards. A certain biographer of Machiavelli, a few years ago, printed the following odd sentence: "His complexion was black, and he had a long thin beard. He was thus in every respect contemptible." This is logic with a vengeance; but it may be offered to my readers as a warning. The world is a very impetuous judge, and is almost as sure to form an estimate of you upon the manner of your beard as upon the various testimonials of reputation which your deeds or your acquaintance are able to supply you with.

Sir Richard Burton, in one of his early books of travel, gives us some useful information on this subject. It will be especially useful to those of us who are likely to have much or even a little to do with Orientals. The words have a local application to the Province of Scinde; but their good sense will carry far beyond the watershed of the Indus which traverses that somewhat tiresome and dull district.

"Concerning your beard:

"You must not wear it too long. The people have a proverb that long-bearded individuals are, generally speaking, fools, and it is an inconvenient appendage, more troublesome than a wife, or daughter in her teens, requiring black silk bags to protect it from the dust and sun, oils of all kinds to prevent its thinning, dye every three days, and so on.

"You must not clip it too short, on peril of being a 'fast' man.

"In conversation you must caress your beard with your right hand. If you wish to be emphatic, swear by it. Be careful in what sentence you allude to it; if you speak of anything offensive and your beard in the same breath, you will have committed a mistake, which men will not soon forget. And when you promise by your beard, recollect that you have pledged your honour.

"If a man seizes your beard in anger, you are justified, paganly speaking, of course, in clutching your dagger, and sending your insulter to 'kingdom come' without benefit of clergy.

"If, on the contrary, a woman, or even a man, in all the humility of supplication, apply the tips of trembling fingers to the 'antennæ of your compassionate feelings,' grant, if possible, the request for the honour of your beard."

This is interesting, if only to show the many uses to which a part of our frame, which most of us are so ready to dispense with, may be applied. These Scindians are, moreover, fond of dyeing their beards. In such a case one would like to know if an oath upon a black beard would hold good if the oathmonger subsequently coloured his beard a brick-red or a sky-blue. It seems improbable, especially among a people so smart at evasive tricks and ruses as these Orientals. Obviously, too, an engagement made "by my beard" could be absolutely avoided by getting the beard removed root and crop.

For many centuries the beard has been a meeting point of dissension with the clergy. Even as in our own day the curate often has an earnest, and perhaps a hot argument with his vicar about his moustaches, so in the early ages of the Church the mandates of the Bishops on the subject were strenuously resisted by the lesser beard-loving clergy. Our modern vicars do not go so far as to declare that a beard is an unchristian growth, and a moustache a manifest temptation of the evil one. But many of them would still regard a moustached curate as no less impossible in their parishes than a deaf precentor.

It is a matter of tradition and sentiment, of course—nothing more. There is no law in the gospels on the subject. As far as I know, there is nothing in Leviticus that even an unreasonable enthusiast about Hebraic institutions could coerce into the semblance of doctrine for our services. Nevertheless, the feeling is not to be defied. And we of the laity, for our part, realising as we do that, for example, in the matter of wooing a wife, our brothers in the Church have more than a slight advantage over us even without the aid of moustaches, are perfectly willing to agree with the episcopal and other traditional notifications on this subject. In the eleventh century, the Pope empowered certain Bishops to appropriate the goods of the clergy in their dioceses who refused to shave. It seems rather a tyrannical decree; but the delinquents were none the less wrong to be so much at the mercy of trivial personal ambitions.

There are fashions in beards, as in clothes, nose-rings, and tattooing. Horace Walpole tells us prettily enough how the fashion of wearing a beard at all reappeared in France a few centuries ago.

"Francis the First, amusing himself with his courtiers one winter's day, was struck on the chin with a piece of a tile, which chanced to be taken up in a snowball. As the wounded part could not be shaved, he let his beard grow; and the fashion was revived, after it had been dropped for a century.

"It is said, I know not with what truth, that the same Prince, having lost his hair and an eye by disease, introduced the wig and the hat. The latter had before been used in riding to cover the face from the sun; but the bonnet continued to be the ceremonial covering."

Of course there are always men to be found robust enough of nature to be indifferent to such conventionalities as the cut of a beard or a coat. Upon the whole, however, it seems unwise to offend the world just for the sake of a little private gratification, or pseudo-gratification. This may be affirmed as a general rule. The private soldier who is dismissed because he will not shave does not deserve much pity; and so also of the curate who estranges himself from his vicar because he insists upon not parting with his monstaches.

But there are two classes of men to whom a little explicit advice may be offered about beards, with small danger of error on my part or theirs. A dimple in the chin should, up to the age of thirty or thereabouts, be a pledge of war to extermination against the beard. And on the other hand, the man who finds it easier to keep his money than his countenance would do well to give his beard all the encouragement he can.

suddenly called away to attend a distinguished Senator, who had just got lead-poisoned — Anglicé, shot — by a rival politician; and he had left us, with profuse apologies, to our own devices. The result was dreary. It was a bachelor party; and with no especial call to the drawing-room, we had elected to stay where we were—actuated, I suppose, by a barbarian affection for the site of the feast which had passed away.

Socially speaking, we were an extremely heavy assembly. We numbered amongst us two men in their anecdotalage, one who only used his tongue for the benefit of the other sex, and seven others who had no sympathies in common. Each had offered his quota for the amusement of the others, and each as he spoke was voted more unentertaining than his predecessors. Mr. Hiram K. Spicer had given us many details of the stamps, flumes, elevators, and other plant of the "Roaring Thieves" gold-mine (Sierra Nevada, Cal.), and had shown conclusively, and entirely to his own satisfaction, if not to ours, why it was necessary for the cashier of the company to bolt and ruin half the shareholders. Mr. Spence, an attaché of the British embassy, had explained at great length the reason why his Government ought, by virtue of the Berlin Treaty, to supervise the Sultan of Turkey's meat bill, and prevent the Sublime Porte from erecting new music-halls—or custom-houses, was it?—in Armenia. Mr. Silas M. Reedmaker, of Pittsburg, Pa., had quoted from memory a most exhaustive table of specific gravities of the paraffine products yielded by the wells in his neighbourhood; and had deducted therefrom, by the aid of his pencil and a menu-card, the probable size of certain vesicular hollows which he had shown to exist within the earth's crust. Mr. Abel B. Ore, a Philadelphia financier, had delivered a spirited threnody on the late corner in silver, and had wound up his remarks by a solid lecture on the evils of bi-metalism. And a stout gentleman from Cincinnati was endeavouring to show three of us how foolish it was of the Jews to eschew the chief product of his native town, when Travison's uplifted voice was heard from the other end of the table:

"You don't know how to suspend animation like that, I take it!"

Travison was chief officer of the a.s. "Elsinore," a Transatlantic liner. He was a slight man, very prettily built, very wiry, and always extremely well-dressed.

THE CHIEF OFFICER'S WAGER.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE WAGER WAS MADE.

"THE thing is utterly impossible. I tell you no man living could do it unless he had the power of sleeping in a coffin for ten days at a stretch, as those Indian fakir chaps have."

It was after dinner, and things were getting flat. Our host, a doctor, had been

At sea, his voice was high-pitched and penetrating. On shore, it was delicately modulated, and soft as a woman's. So that when we heard him raise his tones, we knew that he was excited. And having that knowledge, we ceased to attend to the pork prince, and looked up with animation and expectation; for Travison was never known to show excitement on shore before.

The man he was talking to was Burgoyne, a fellow currently reported to be a millionaire, and who was certainly known to make more mad bets than any one else in New York city. What is further, his wagers were always for huge sums, and he was invariably the winner, so you will understand that when Travison raised his voice to say that a thing was impossible, and Burgoyne had offered to bet that it wasn't, we forgot all about the proposed Hebrew colony at Porkopolis, and turned our eyes towards the end of the table.

The two disputants did not notice us. They had adloved round their chairs to face one another; and though Travison was sober as a judge, I think the American had just about as much under hatches as he could carry—though, mind you, none of his wits had gone astray, and perhaps some of his boisterousness was put on, simply for the purpose of making the other man lose his habitual caution.

"I don't bet as a usual thing," Travison was saying.

"A very wise thing," replied Burgoyne. "It is a risky game for those who haven't much pluck, and people who lose say it's a very wicked game. Personally, I don't see much harm in it. But then, perhaps, I'm prejudiced; for, you see, I'm an invariable winner myself when I can get any one plucky enough to bet with me. Here's luck to your next trip across the pond," he continued, lifting his glass. "You have a sweep on the daily run, I suppose; I'll stand in with you if you like to invest a quarter some time."

"I don't bet as a usual thing, Mr. Burgoyne; but I should like to have a wager with you about this, if it's only to change your luck and knock some of the conceit out of you."

"I never punt for dimes," said Burgoyne, significantly, "and this job isn't worth doing for nothing."

Travison flushed slightly.

"I understand your meaning," said he. "Will fourteen thousand pounds tempt

you? Call it seventy thousand dollars, in round figures."

"Is that your pile?" asked the American, with a sneer.

"Yes; that's my pile, as you gracefully term it," rejoined Travison, who, I could see, was keeping his temper with an effort.

"Can you put it on the table?"

"No, sir, I can't. I don't carry my capital about with me like a poker sharp. But Henderson here will bear me out that I am good for that amount. Won't you?"

I nodded, and tried to pass him a frown of caution, for I knew the man he was dealing with, thoroughly, and did not wish to see my friend and fellow-countryman ruined through an after-dinner boast; though, as yet, I had no notion of its nature. But he ignored my look, and went on:

"Now, Mr. Burgoyne, I'm rather hazy about odds and those sort of things; and though, from your assurance, you ought, perhaps, to give me the advantage, I'll waive that, and we will make it an even bet of seventy thousand dollars, if that suits you. I won't insult you by asking if your credit is equal to that amount."

"Done," said Burgoyne; and after they had shaken hands over it, the American drew from his pocket a natty morocco-leather bound book, and made a pencil note in it.

But that rough-and-ready mode of agreement did not suit the sailor.

"Look here," said he, "we'll do the thing ship-shape whilst we are about it. Henderson, you know both of us. Will you draw up a statement of the bet in black and white, and then we'll sign it!"

"If you wish me to. But had you not better ask Mr. Stone here? He's a lawyer, and he'd do the thing law-fashion, which, all things considered, is perhaps better and surer than ship-fashion."

"No, with all due respect to Mr. Stone, I would rather have you. I don't know him, and I do know you; and I know where to find you. That is, if you don't object, Burgoyne?"

"Henderson's a white man, and good enough for me," said the American, with a nod over his tumbler.

"But I didn't hear what the bet was about," said I, "unless it has something to do with coffins and trances."

Travison gave a short laugh, and said:

"Oh, I thought you had been listening. Well, the matter was this. Burgoyne says we steamship people could never prevent a

smart man getting a free passage on board however hard we tried; and I say we could, with proper precautions. Whereupon he retorts that he could stow away on the 'Elsinore' if he wished to, and not be discovered till the tender came off at Queenstown; and I say that the thing is impossible if I keep a bright look-out for him. And so we are each going to back our own opinion."

"It seems a foolish matter," said I; "but I suppose you are both old enough to know your own business best, and so I'll draw up the document for you, if Burgoyne wishes."

"Fire away," said Burgoyne, and I went up to a side table, and wrote on a sheet of note-paper as follows:

"Basil Burgoyne bets Charles Trivison seventy thousand dollars that he can get a free passage in the a. a. 'Elsinore' across the Atlantic. If Trivison can lay hands on him in Queenstown Harbour, Burgoyne pays. If, on the other hand, Burgoyne can travel that far without being detected by Trivison, then Trivison pays."

I handed it across to Burgoyne, and he read it out.

"My good Henderson," he said, "if I felt inclined for sharp practice, Trivison would be badly left if he signed his name to this. Why, man alive, my particular chum, Jerrold, who is one of the directors of the Steamship Company, would give me a free pass in a moment if I asked for one, and then, by all the rules of equity, I could ask for the stakes."

I felt very angry at myself for making the blunder, and looked, I suspect, tolerably foolish, for there was a broad grin all round the room.

"Better give Stone his two dollars and a half, and do the thing decently, if it's to be done at all," remarked the Cincinnati man.

Stone laughed, and said:

"Insert the words 'as a genuine stow-away, and without favour from officers or owners,' after 'Atlantic,' and then it will be fair enough, and legal enough too for all practical purposes."

And so that I did, passing the fresh copy to Trivison for inspection. He read it through, took a sixpenny stamp from his pocket-book, and affixed it at the foot of the page, saying:

"There is a charter-party stamp, and if we sign our names across that, 'twill be legal enough for the Bars of both continents to look at."

So they subscribed their names, and the document was given into my charge, and Burgoyne asked when the "Elsinore" was going to sail.

"Saturday," said Trivison, "about mid-day."

"And this is Monday. Well, don't let me make your life a burden to you. You needn't trouble to look out for me before Thursday. I'll report myself to you then."

"Thanks," said the sailor. "I must say you are behaving very well over this. I should never have twigged that slip about the free passage. Look here, I'll make an offer. If you do manage to get on board, you'll want some clothes at the other end, whether I catch you or whether I don't. So pack a portmanteau, and I'll take charge of it for you."

"Really, you are very good," replied the American, "and I'll gladly avail myself of your kindness. A bag shall be sent down to the ship before she sails."

They were wonderfully polite to one another now that preliminaries had been settled. It is ever thus. Two men will use every nasty word in their vocabulary for half an hour, and then when their friends have interposed and arranged for them to fight a duel, they will speak nothing but the most polished pleasantries, till one or the other is comfortably killed.

But though Trivison's politeness was induced by pure gratitude for his adversary's large-mindedness in the "free passage" incident, I saw beneath Burgoyne's bluff civility a shrewd foreknowledge that he was entering into the contest as a certain victor. He drank his liquor with a self-satisfied smirk, and said that he had been thinking of taking a run across to London for some time, to do the theatres, and this bet decided him. If any of us happened to be over there, he'd stand the best dinner money could produce, just in memory of to-day.

"You haven't got the money yet," observed Spicer, "and gambling's an uncertain business."

"It's more certain than speculating in your gold-mine shares, Mr. Spicer. Come, if you think Trivison is going to win, why don't you back him?"

"Will you give me odds?"

"No; but I'll lay evens in what you like. Come, that's a reasonable offer. You can take it, or leave it."

"Put ten thousand dollars down to

Hiram K. Spicer," said that worthy by way of retort.

I noticed that Trivison looked rather annoyed as this wager was booked, for, of course, the larger the sum Burgoyne stood to win, the greater would be his efforts to carry it to a successful issue. But as the sailor said nothing I did not feel called upon to interfere, and Burgoyne had entered a twenty thousand dollars to the pork prince, and another ten thousand dollars to the Philadelphia banker, before he closed his book. Then looking up he addressed us all.

"Look here, gentlemen. There's a sum of one hundred and ten thousand dollars piled up over this affair, and strait-laced people might call that gambling. Now, Dr. Stanley, in whose house we are, is by no means a Puritan; but it wouldn't do for him to countenance such a raise as this. It would ruin his practice if it became known. You are all men of the world. You know how people pervert things! Half the old women in New York City would firmly believe that he had instigated the whole affair, if any of the facts were let drop. So I must ask you one and all to keep your own counsel on the matter for the present. When it has all blown over, you may gossip about it as much as you please, so long as Stanley's name and house are omitted from the yarn; but for the present it had better not come out at all."

We pledged our several words to silence; but I was rather puzzled as to his object in avoiding publicity. That it was for some motive of self-interest, and not for Dr. Stanley's sake, I felt sure. Burgoyne loved to be pilloried in the papers. To pose before his numerous admirers as the hero of some fresh adventure, was meat and drink to him. And as Stanley, who disliked his bluster, had only asked him to dinner because Spence wished to meet him, I calculated that Mr. Basil Burgoyne's generous interest in the doctor's welfare was merely a blind for something else. But what his scheme was I could not discover.

The party broke up soon after this, and as Trivison had a second engagement, I did not get another word with him.

CHAPTER II.

HOW MY PASSAGE WAS TAKEN.

FOR the next three days I was too much immersed in business to give the wager more than a passing thought. A party of

politicians, no more corrupt, perhaps, than American politicians usually are, had been paid their price by interested capitalists, and had accordingly chosen to consider that their country's weal demanded a readjustment of certain tariffs. The other politicians of the same party, actuated by that untarnished honour which exists amongst thieves, and expecting a similar good turn when their own time came, backed their brethren up; and, in consequence, a bill passed through Congress which put what was intended to be a prohibitive duty on a certain import in which I was interested. For the sake of argument, we will say that the import was artificial teeth. But though the artificial teeth of American manufacture were cheaper, still the English artificial teeth were better than the American samples—better even than the teeth grown on individual premises; and so, despite the heavy tax, the demand would not be much decreased. Yet all the same, the readjustment of the artificial tooth trade is a weighty matter on account of its very vastness; and so, what with counting the enormous number of barrels I had in stock, and framing new contracts with the American tooth-dealers, and one thing and another, for these three days I was up to the eyes in work.

On the Friday afternoon a cable was handed in to me from our world-famed artificial tooth factory in England. It bade me cross over to Staffordshire before the end of the month, and naturally I determined to go by the "Elsinore." She was not a fast boat, but tolerably comfortable as ocean steamers go, and her Captain always kept a decent table. Besides, there was every likelihood of being plenty to enliven the dreary passage. So I took the cars down to the Steamship Company's offices and went in, thinking it best to secure a berth in person, so as to be certain of a good choice. I was rather surprised to find Burgoyne talking to the head clerk, and I think he was surprised to see me, and not over pleased either, for a shade of annoyance crossed his face. However, he was too old a poker-player not to have a good command over his features, and, turning round with a cheery smile, asked me how I did before I could get a word in.

"I'm off to London some time soon, and I did think of crossing in one of their ships," he said, with a backward nod at the clerk; "but that slow old tab the

'Elsinore' is the next to sail, and her small cabins don't suit me when there is anything better to be had. What are you up to? Come to try for new freights to counteract the new tariff?"

"No, the tariff does me no harm, in fact the reverse, and I'm going over to England to arrange for larger supplies. I happened to be after a berth in the very ship you were talking about. She'll suit me well enough. I'm not so fastidious as you are, and not so lengthy either. A man of your size wants good roomy quarters to stow himself away in with any degree of comfort."

He looked down complacently at his huge limbs.

"Oh, I can stow away small if needs must; but when there's no particular necessity for it, I have a strong objection to being cribbed and confined in your pill-box cabin. It's almost as bad as going as a bona-fide stowaway."

"A man of your size would make a rum sort of stowaway, Mr. Burgoyne," said the head clerk, with a laugh, in which we both joined.

"I'm sorry you are not coming by the 'Elsinore,'" said I. "Her chief officer is a very good fellow. You know him—Travison?"

"Oh, yes, I know him. Very good fellow indeed, isn't he? There, ta-ta; I can't wait."

And he was gone.

"Of course, it's no use my cracking up our ships to you, Mr. Henderson," said the clerk, as the balze-covered door swung to. "You know all about them, and so I'll freely own that we've faster and better fitted boats than the 'Elsinore.' And so have the other companies for the matter of that, though she is a lot dryer and more comfortable in dirty weather than many of the newer ones. But," he continued, with a smile, "I don't think it was the knowledge of the 'Elsinore' being next on the roster that caused Mr. Burgoyne to say he'd wait for another week. He asked to look at the passenger-list, and saw that at present there are only three names down—a father, mother, and son. He likes plenty of company, does Mr. Burgoyne, and would rather wait a week or two than cross in a boat that will perhaps never have a pack of cards on her table during the whole run. You see, the elder passenger is a Methodist New Connexion Minister going over on a preaching tour, and he wouldn't be of Mr. Burgoyne's cut at all. But, as I

told him, the season is too late for a full passenger list. Why, we've only got twelve names down for the steerage so far, and I should be a bit surprised if we got another half-dozen altogether. Not that it matters to us though; for with freights what they are now, dead cargo's a sight better paying than live."

"Did he ask about that, then?"

"He did, and he didn't. He asked a question or two, and I told him just what I've been telling you. The 'Elsinore' will have her lower decks pretty well packed. Most of her steerage berths will be replaced with cargo, and most of her cabin berths will be empty."

"Cute man," I thought; "knows exactly beforehand how the land lies. But he will have to be lively if he intends to slip on board. She sails to-morrow." And then, addressing myself to the cabin-plan which the clerk laid before me, I chose quarters I had occupied previously, and went out into the street again.

It was five o'clock, and as I had nothing special on hand till dinner at seven, I determined to drive down to the docks and relieve Travison's anxiety by telling him that all was safe so far.

I found him standing by a gangway, looking listlessly at a big iron-bound packing-case that the quay crane was just hoisting on board. He greeted me cordially, and still more cordially when he learned that we should be companions for the next ten days.

"I wish I'd known Burgoyne was at large before, though," he added. "I kept an anchor-watch all last night; and as I've been here on deck all this day, and have to-night and to-morrow to look forward to, the chances are that I shall be pretty tolerably knocked up before we get to sea."

"Why not get one of the crew to take your place?"

"I have got two already; but I'm playing for a large stake, old man, and I'm just going to see this through with my own eyes, if they'll stay open."

For a couple of minutes we kept silence, watching the winch-men lower crate after crate, and packing-case after packing-case, into the yawning chasms before us. And then I asked:

"Shall you be pretty full?"

"Down to Plimsoll's mark. And as it will be nearly all dead weight, she'll ride a bit heavy if it comes on to blow, as well it may, now that the equinoctials are about.

But you are good enough sailor not to mind that!"

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of myself in the least. My stomach has made its peace with the stormy seas long ago. But it struck me that the more of these solid boxes and bales you have in your holds, the less chance there is of any one hiding in them. Those stevedores utilise every cubic inch of room."

"Quite true. They've battened down the lower hold already—look down the hatch; you will see the tarpaulin—and one of my men assured me that there was not room for a rat to hide in it. Besides, however tightly cargo is jammed, it always shifts a little in a sea-way, and any one who was down amongst it would inevitably be crushed to death, if indeed he was not stifled for want of air before we got under weigh. But no one in his senses would ever dream of trying to stow away down there. By-the-bye, when do you come on board? To-morrow morning?"

"To-morrow morning, I suppose. The berths would not be ready to-night, would they?"

"You can have my place, if you'll sleep here. I shan't want it. Or, stay—what is your number?"

"Eighteen."

"Then that's the steward who looks after you—that chap with the knobby head who has just rushed out of the deck-house. You must remember him clearly enough; he's unique in his way. Williams! here."

"Yessir," said Williams, scudding up, and touching his forehead. "Hafternoon, Mr. 'Enderston, sir; 'ope you're well! Comin' hover wi' us?"

"Yes," said Trivison, "Mr. Henderson is coming with us; and I want you to get number eighteen ready, so that he may sleep here to-night."

"Yessir," said Williams, touching his head to the pair of us, and departing rapidly.

Williams was always in a hurry. Perhaps the constant bustling about had something to do with those queer bumps on his bald head. I never saw such bumps on any other head. Neither have I ever come across such another buster as Williams.

Trivison and I had four or five more minutes' desultory chat, and then I left, promising to be back by eleven o'clock.

Now Ready, Price Sixpence.

The SPRING and EASTER EXTRA NUMBER OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS,

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CHAPTER III.

JOHN TYRRELL and his sister had always more invitations for the summer months than it was possible for them to accept, even though they invariably divided their forces, and never visited together. Miss Tyrrell was apt to be quite plaintive on the hardship of having to offer herself as a substitute for her brother, but her own position in the fashionable world was so high and so assured that, as a matter of fact, she was, and knew herself to be, little less of an acquisition than John Tyrrell himself.

The month of July was spent by the latter in yachting with some friends, and he had arranged to stay on with the same party until the second week of August. The sudden collapse of this arrangement, owing to the serious illness of the host, left him with a week on his hands, and he wrote to some old friends at whose place in Yorkshire he was due on the eleventh of August, offering himself to them nearly ten days earlier than he had been expected.

The delighted reply he received was full of hopes that he would not find the house unbearably dull until the shooting began; and as his host, who had driven him from the little Yorkshire station at which he arrived one lovely August afternoon, led the way across the large, silent hall into the apparently equally silent drawing-

room, it crossed Tyrrell's mind that he might have been wiser to go abroad for the next ten days. He had heard during the five-mile drive across the moors that there was only one other visitor in the house at present; but his host had not been communicative on the subject of that one, and Tyrrell had accordingly taken it for granted that his fellow-guest was not likely to prove interesting, and had not been curious enough even to find out whether it was a man or a woman.

The drawing-room itself was empty; but under the verandah, just outside the French windows, which stood wide open, stood a tea-table. No one was visible to the two men as they stood in the drawing-room doorway; but the indistinct murmur of women's voices came to them, and in response to her husband's cheery call Mrs. Oliphant came round the corner from the verandah into the room.

"I am so glad, so very glad to see you," said she, shaking Tyrrell warmly by the hand. She and her fine-looking husband were old country people, rich and cultivated, making a point of spending the season in town, and of knowing every one worth knowing there. They had been friends of Tyrrell's, however, long before he had come under that category, and he had known them all his life.

"It is so unexpectedly delightful to get you all to ourselves," she went on; "and perhaps it is inconsistent after that to say that we should have made up a party for you, only no one is to be had on such short notice. We have one other guest, however, who has come for a little country quiet, almost as unexpectedly as yourself. So I hope you won't be dull."

She moved towards the window as she spoke, the two men following her, and as

she stepped on to the verandah she paused and turned her head to Tyrrell, who was still inside the room, and unable to see more than the skirts of his fellow-guest.

"I had hoped to have the pleasure of introducing you two to one another," Mrs. Oliphant said. "I am quite disappointed to find that I am too late. It always seemed so strange that you should not be acquainted, having so many mutual friends."

She moved on as she spoke, and Tyrrell stepped out of the room.

"Lady Latter!" he exclaimed. "What a delightful surprise!"

Sitting in a low basket-chair by the tea-table was a little dark woman, with an ugly, piquante face, a very perfect figure, as modern fashion understands the term, very perfectly clad according to the latest dictates of the same authority. An old-fashioned critic might have objected not only to the cut of her gown, but to the signification of her features. He might have demanded whether the face of the very cleverest of women should, at thirty-five, be entirely destitute of any shade of womanly sympathy; whether any quantity of wit and brilliancy could be cited as either reason or excuse for such a pair of eyes as were lifted to John Tyrrell's face. Their owner gave him her hand with an air at once defiant and provocative, and answered with a little grimace, of which she perfectly well knew the effect.

"What a pugnacious person you must be, Mr. Tyrrell! Have we not quarrelled quite enough?"

"By no means!" he responded, promptly. "One of us has to give in, you know. Lady Latter has told you, no doubt," he added, turning to Mrs. Oliphant, "that during the week she and I spent together on Lord Southdale's yacht, the resources of the entire party were severely taxed to keep the peace between us. I wonder she did not persuade you to send me to the Antipodes!"

Mrs. Oliphant laughed.

"I am not afraid," she said. "On the contrary, I expect to see you fight yourselves into friendship. It is quite time, I'm sure. You'll have a cup of tea, won't you?"

"Thanks," he said, adding, as he took it from her: "How green and quiet you are here! The drive from the station struck me more than ever this afternoon."

Before Mrs. Oliphant could reply, a laugh from Lady Latter forestalled her.

"You must have had a terribly long journey, Mr. Tyrrell," she said. "I can only refer such a very bad compliment as that to physical and mental collapse. We may be quiet, we may, indeed, be green; but it is hardly civil of you to tell us so—so soon."

John Tyrrell looked at her as she spoke with a smile.

"You have scored, Lady Latter," he answered. "I plead guilty to arrant stupidity, and I apologise—to Mrs. Oliphant. She will have mercy on me, I know, and you will not. Pardon me if I add that I am afraid you yourself can hardly be as brilliantly penetrative as usual, or you would hardly need to be reminded that no one who knew her could speak of Lady Latter and quiet in the same breath."

Mrs. Oliphant laughed.

"This is too bad!" she said. "Where will you be by this time to-morrow if you begin so soon?"

"You are quite right, dear Mrs. Oliphant," replied Lady Latter; "it is a pity to squander valuable ammunition. I shall go in. I have welcomed Mr. Tyrrell far more effusively than he had any right to expect, and I have broken to him something of what he has before him, and now Fate sends him a respite. I am not in fighting trim, and I shall go in now and collect my forces. Until this evening Mr. Tyrrell." And with a little mocking gesture of farewell she moved away into the house.

It was, on the surface, as Mrs. Oliphant had said, a very strange thing that, until three weeks before, Lady Latter and John Tyrrell should have known one another only by sight. They were both prominent members of London society, they were constantly to be met at the same houses; but they had never been introduced. Lady Latter was very rich; she had money of her own, and her husband was an Indian judge. The marriage had not been wholly successful—Lady Latter best knew why—and when she took it into her head to declare that the dulness and monotony of Indian society were no longer to be borne by her, Sir George Latter had done everything that lay in his power to further her future residence in London. It was now five years since she had set up her establishment in Chelsea, and her house was one of the "smartest" in London. She was not clever, nor was she witty, but she had unlimited audacity; and,

having determined to be a success, and being perfectly aware that she was neither pretty nor fascinating on conventional lines, she proceeded to make a line for herself, and substituted "dash" and "chic" for the commonplace feminine graces. She was very amusing, people said; there was nothing too cruel or too coarse for her to say, and, at the same time, she had a most useful faculty—when she thought it worth while to exercise it—of adapting her conversation to her listener's taste.

The key to the apparent mystery of her non-acquaintance with John Tyrrell lay in her very clever and far-sighted determination to stand out from the crowd. Every one knew John Tyrrell, every one raved about him. Therefore she declared, that as an actor, he irritated her, and as a man, she would not have him introduced to her. Of course, this statement was hardly formulated before it came to John Tyrrell's ears, and the mutual friend who eventually brought them together on board his yacht without previous warning to either, had been more bold than prudent. His experiment, however, had been crowned with success. John Tyrrell's vanity was touched, his reputation for fascination was at stake, and, under the circumstances, it was quite impossible to him to refrain from taxing his every resource to the utmost. So clever a man could hardly fail to take the right way with so shallow a woman, especially as he found her very amusing, and not unattractive; and Lady Latter decided with herself—with how little power to decide otherwise she herself hardly knew—that an incessantly sparkling war of wits between herself and John Tyrrell would give people quite as much, if not more, to talk about than her perseverance in her alleged dislike to him.

Lady Latter was alone in the drawing-room when John Tyrrell, a little earlier than he need have been, came down after dressing for dinner. She was evidently only just down, for she was standing at the window looking out into the garden. She turned as he opened the door.

"Ah, Mr. Tyrrell!" she said, lightly, "Fate is not kind to me. We have the field to ourselves, and I am not ready to give battle."

"The obvious retort to that is that I am afraid you must be ill," he answered. "But as I believe that really is the case, I will offer a flag of truce in the shape of very sincere regrets, and refrain from

seizing my advantage. Mrs. Oliphant tells me you are a victim to neuralgia!"

"Yes," she answered. "Too much season, I suppose. The Oliphants and I were staying with the same people about ten days ago, when I really made the most ridiculous exhibition of myself—had to go to bed, and so on—and she very kindly persuaded me to come here and try what country quiet would do for me."

"I'm afraid it has not proved exactly a sovereign remedy," he said.

"Not quite," she assented. Not even the traces of physical suffering on her face could soften it, or make it womanly; and it was more audacious and cynical even than usual, as she went on: "It has occurred to me that country quiet is hardly in my line. To tell you the truth, I have been bored to death, and I dare say I shall really be better for a little warfare. It will surprise you, no doubt, but I was actually charmed to hear that you were coming! No," as he received the words with a low bow, "don't flatter yourself! Any man would have done!"

But she looked at the man before her as though she were not at all inclined to quarrel with fortune for sending him, and not another.

Their host, who was not particularly observant, though the kindest and worthiest of men, had a serious conference with his wife that night as to whether the same house would hold their two guests for more than twenty-four hours.

"My dear, there will be a row," he said, with prophetic apprehension.

And in spite of his wife's shrewd assurances to the contrary, he was quite as much surprised as relieved to see the combatants, after breakfast the next morning, instead of flying from one another to the remotest corners of the estate, proceed together into the garden, where they prepared to spend in skirmishing the hours during which their host and hostess were inevitably occupied. They established themselves under a large cedar, in connection with which Lady Latter's fashionable hat and empire veil looked inexpressibly incongruous.

One long summer morning followed another, and though there was little or no variety in the manner in which they passed, Lady Latter's neuralgia gradually disappeared. Mrs. Oliphant, finding her two guests quite capable of amusing one another, generally left them together until lunch time; and in the cool of the after-

noon Lady Letter took to riding sometimes with Tyrrell and her host, sometimes with Tyrrell alone. The rides became longer and longer; and possibly it may have been the horse exercise which had such a beneficial effect upon her constitution, certainly it was the fatigue it produced which led to the lazily tolerant armistice which usually reigned between herself and Tyrrell during the quiet, sauntering evenings with which the days closed.

There was no change in the brilliant weather until the night before the eleventh of August, when, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, it completely broke up. On the morning of that day, on which a large party was to arrive for the shooting season, Mrs. Oliphant sat down to breakfast with a countenance expressive of the blankest despair.

"Isn't it too dreadful?" she said, piteously, addressing the table at large as the wind howled; and the rain beat against the window after a fashion which would have done credit to November. "After the lovely weather we have had it really does seem too bad. However," she went on, turning to Lady Letter, "I am glad we have not been so unfortunate while you and Mr. Tyrrell have been so dependent upon the weather for any sort of entertainment! I'm afraid you might have quarrelled in earnest if you had had a fortnight of such dreariness as this," she finished, with a smile.

"Instead of settling down like a couple of comparatively tame cats, our fate would have been that of the celebrated natives of Kilkenny, you think," replied Lady Letter, glancing across the table at Tyrrell as she spoke. "It is more than possible! Well," she added, as they all rose from the table, "we must take refuge in the drawing-room this morning, Mr. Tyrrell, and please prepare yourself to be more amusing than you were yesterday. The weather is depressing."

There was a fire in the drawing-room, notwithstanding the assertion of the almanack that it was the eleventh of August. In spite of—or perhaps even by force of contrast with—the grey, dripping desolation outside, the room looked particularly bright and attractive as John Tyrrell opened the door a little after eleven o'clock. And Lady Letter, too, looked attractive after her kind as she sat ensconced in a large chair, with her very pretty feet rather extensively exposed to view upon the fender, and the current number of the most popular society paper in her hand.

"You are late," she said, without turning her head or shutting her paper as he came in.

"Don't tell me that," he said, as he shut the door. "I've been painfully aware of it for the last half hour. Oliphant kept me."

"I told you to come and amuse me. You should not have let Oliphant keep you."

He dropped into a chair near her with a laugh.

"How like a woman!" he said. "Well, here I am at last, at any rate, and desperately anxious to be entertaining. I had a line from Estcourt this morning with some rather fine sketches of some of our friends at Pontresina. Let us see if they will serve your turn."

He began to unfasten a roll of paper he had in his hand; but she stopped him with a petulant, peremptory gesture. "No!" she said, "I know they won't. Estcourt bore me always. Besides, it's too late. I have the blues."

Her manner, in spite of her obvious efforts to make it so, was distinctly not so lively and callous as usual, and Tyrrell looked at her keenly as she sat turning over the pages of her paper before he said:

"I have the blues, too; but I'm afraid to hope the reason is the same in your case as in mine."

She looked round at him quickly.

"What is the matter with you?" she said.

"One of the pleasantest weeks I ever spent comes to an end to-day."

She looked away again quickly with a rather high-pitched laugh.

"We must have a mutual taste for battle," she said. "Do you know I am absolutely sorry, too, that it is over!"

"It has not been all battle," he answered, leaning forward, and speaking in a rather lower tone, "it has not been all battle and it has resulted in a lasting peace I hope. Won't you shake hands on it, and won't you let me try to make our last morning as pleasant as possible?"

She held out her hand with a shrug of her shoulders and a light laugh.

"We will call it peace for the present," she said, "and you may be as amusing as you know how, for as long as you can keep it up."

The dinner-table that night presented a very striking contrast to the breakfast-table of the morning. The two afternoon trains had each brought a contribution to the Oliphants' shooting party, and the

house was now full to overflowing of girls and mammas, shooting men, tennis-playing men, flirting men, maids and valets. The whole place seemed to be full of life, and at half-past eight all that life, all the colour, light, and gaiety in the house seemed to be concentrated in the dining-room, where dinner was in full swing. The cold, grey evening was shut out; the bright, well-decorated table was brilliant with lamps and candles; every one of the sixteen new arrivals seemed to have had his or her appetite for both dinner and amusement whetted by the annoyances and discomforts of a long railway journey on a wet day, and to be bent on ignoring the dreadful atmospheric possibilities hanging over the morrow. The girls had, apparently, put on their prettiest frocks and their prettiest smiles, the men had shaken up all their conversational resources, and, as their neighbours were fortunately not disposed to be exacting, every one was pleased.

John Tyrrell and Lady Latter were on different sides of the table, each out of ear-shot of the other's conversation, but, of course, each well within the other's sight. Lady Latter's neighbours apparently failed to interest her, and she paid them very little attention. Tyrrell had on his right hand a handsome and dignified elderly lady, who was known to every one as being well worth talking to, and on his left a singularly pretty girl, who had made a success on the stage by playing little, refined, modern comedy parts admirably, because she was a lady by birth and education and had an acute natural sense of fun, and who thought that neither life nor art had anything more to offer her in the way of happiness or success. She had met Tyrrell several times, and late on in the course of dinner she turned her bright, confident face ruthlessly from the young man on her right, who thereupon was seized with a wild conviction that all the lamps and candles had suddenly gone out, and that nothing was left to him but ice pudding, and said, in her pretty, light voice:

"I don't think we have met since the Draycotts' 'at home,' Mr. Tyrrell, when we were both dreadfully bored, and one of us was—well, let us call it fractious," and she laughed musically. Nora Glynn had been a spoilt child all her life, her success had turned her pretty, empty head in no slight degree, and on the occasion in question she had been as thoroughly out

of temper as only such a very pretty girl would dare to be in public.

"I was much humiliated at falling so ignominiously, to make myself amusing," Tyrrell responded, as he echoed her laugh. "I hope to be allowed some day to try again."

"How unkind of you," she said, with a pretty little twist of her shoulders. "I think people who heap coals of fire on one are most dreadful. Don't do it any more, please; but tell me about Miss Malet. I am so interested about her, and I want so much to know all about her. I should be so glad to know her if you think she would like it."

Tyrrell looked at her with a smile lurking about his mouth. He had taken her pretty little measure long ago, and there was something irresistibly comic to him in her tone of patronising friendliness considered in connection with Selma.

"I am sure she would be charmed," he said, gravely. "What do you want to know about her? You have heard her recite?"

At this point of the conversation Nora Glynn became aware that Lady Latter's eyes were fixed upon her with an expression which made the girl mentally apply to her the words, "detestable thing." Nora Glynn did not like Lady Latter at any time, so she proceeded to push her dessert-plate absently on one side, and, resting her elbow on the table, fixed her eyes on Tyrrell's face with an expression of absorbing interest in their conversation.

"Yes," she said, "I've heard her. I know all about her in that way, of course. Personally, I mean. She is coming out in November, isn't she? Is she dreadfully frightened? Do tell her from me that one soon gets over it. I know just how she is feeling."

"I will tell her," responded Tyrrell, with the same unmoved gravity of demeanour. "She will be most grateful to you. She is very nervous, of course?"

"Of course, poor girl! She is very young, isn't she, Mr. Tyrrell? I watched her the other day, when a lot of people were saying pretty things to her, and it struck me that she must be really very young."

Tyrrell frowned slightly, and then he laughed.

"She is not at her best in society," he answered. "It is very difficult to get her to a party at all; she is all for art in the abstract, at present, and cannot see what society has to do with it."

Nora Glynn sighed, and put her pretty head sentimentally on one side.

"Ah, poor girl," she said, "we all have to go through it, Mr. Tyrrell, don't we? and grow older and wiser with time." Then, as Mrs. Oliphant rose, she lingered a moment for Lady Latter's edification, and said, with a bewitching smile, also arranged to the same end: "She's such a pretty girl, though, and every one will make such a fuss with her that, no doubt, her disaffectionment won't be very bitter. She will enjoy herself awfully next season. Oh, I must go! Lady Latter and I are quite the last."

Lady Latter passed her arm affectionately through the girl's as she joined her, and they went out side by side. But they were not side by side when the men entered the drawing-room later in the evening, and about Nora Glynn's entire person was the air of one who has been snubbed and sat upon severally, but so cleverly that she could only devour her feelings in impotent silence.

Tyrrell was the last man to come in, and Lady Latter was already surrounded. He passed the little group of which she was the centre, and sat down by the wife of a fashionable novelist, who was one of the guests, a clever and very pretty little woman, with whom he was on the friendliest terms. He did not see Lady Latter follow him with her eyes; he would not have understood the odd, indefinable expression in them if he had done so. It almost suggested that she did not understand herself.

The evening passed on, and one by one the men about her dropped away, reduced, metaphorically, to cinders by her scathing tongue, and wondering what had happened to annoy her. She was sitting quite alone when "good-nights" began to be said, and she rose almost without speaking.

Tyrrell was holding the door open, and as she passed him she stopped and held out her hand, lifting her eyes suddenly to his face as she did so. Their expression was enigmatical no longer.

"Good night, Mr. Tyrrell!" she said.

"Good night, Lady Latter!"

CHILI.

THE long, narrow strip on the map which represents Chili to the untraveller eye, is not much to look at. Nor is the country itself remarkable for physical

beauty. It stretches in a narrow line from Cape Horn to the Tropic of Capricorn—a length of coast somewhere about two thousand miles. But between the sea and the inner line of the Andes—which divides the republican State from the Argentine territory—there is nowhere a greater depth than two hundred miles, and at some points the distance is only some twenty-five to fifty miles. In round numbers it has an area of about one hundred and twenty-five thousand square miles, and a population of about two and a half millions. The greater portion of the area is arid and unattractive—even repulsive in appearance. North of Valparaiso there is little vegetation; but between Valparaiso and Valdivia is a rich and luxuriant region known as "The Garden of South America." South of this, vegetation again becomes more and more scanty as Terra del Fuego is approached.

Chili is not remarkably rich in either fauna or flora, although it does possess some peculiar forms of vegetation. One of its most curious trees is the soap-tree, in the inside of the bark of which is found a curious white growth, with many of the qualities of soap. There is also the Coquito palm, which yields a sweet sap known as palm-honey, and there are immense forests of huge timber-trees of the conifer class.

The land originally belonged to the Araucanian Indians; but was annexed in the usual way when the Spaniards overran South America in the sixteenth century. The Araucanians were a fine aboriginal race, with well-developed institutions and high conceptions of liberty. At one time they occupied a sort of tributary position to the Incas of Peru, and they were not easily subjugated by the Spaniards. In the southern part, indeed, there is still a large population of independent Araucanian Indians, estimated at about fifty thousand.

The Chilian proper is a descendant of a mixture of the Spanish and Araucanian races. His language is Spanish, and his physique largely so; but the infusion of Indian blood lends him a distinct individuality. Ever since they won their freedom and threw off the Spanish yoke, early in the present century, the Chilians have been passionately attached to representative Government, and have developed a Republican Constitution of which they are extremely proud. It is because of the alleged attempts of President Balmaceda to set aside that Constitution and govern

without a Parliament, that the present revolution has occurred.

For about eighty years now Chili has been an independent Republic, and has thriven under her independence. From being one of the least important of the Spanish Colonies, she has become one of the richest and most prosperous of the South American States. She also claims to be the best regulated and most honourable and business-like in all her dealings. In fact, it is said that the Chilians look upon themselves as the English of South America.

This prosperity has been entirely due to the mineral wealth of the country. Under that arid soil and those inhospitable-looking mountains, are treasures of gold, and silver, and copper, and iodine, and nitrate of soda, and coal, far exceeding the dreams of the old seekers after Eldorado. It is a land of earthquakes; but also of substantial riches. In the early days of the Republic, internal dissensions and revolutions were incessant; but for the last fifty years Chili has had peace within her borders, and since the bloody wars with Bolivia and Peru, between 1879 and 1881, has also been at peace with her neighbours. In the great war of independence, when the Spaniards were driven out of both Chili and Peru, a prominent figure was the gallant Scotchman, Lord Cochrane, afterwards Earl of Dundonald, who commanded the Chilean fleet, and scoured the seas of pirates. In the Chili-Peruvian war, too, many Englishmen and Scotchmen took service with the Republic.

It is, however, only within the last few years that Chili has become a familiar name with the average Briton. To financiers the Republic has long been known as a frequent floater of bonds; but until what is known as the "nitrate boom" set in, about 1869, the ordinary British investor knew little and cared less about that narrow, unpicturesque, and earthquake State on the further side of the Andes.

The extent to which England is now interested in Chili, may be measured from the fact, altogether apart from the quantity of Government Bonds held here, that there are eighteen companies registered in this country for the mining and manufacture of nitrate of soda. The aggregate capital of these companies is close upon six millions sterling, and their producing capacity is about one million tons per annum. In the conveyance of this material

to the consuming centres of Europe, there is immense employment for British vessels. There is also a railway constructed in order to connect the nitrate works with the shipping ports, with a capital of close upon three millions, mostly British, and numerous British firms are established at the ports.

Iquique is the great nitrate shipping port. When Darwin visited the place in 1835, it was a town of a thousand inhabitants, planted, as he described, in a sand-plain at the foot of a wall of rock two thousand feet high, and surrounded by a desert. To-day, Iquique is a city of twenty thousand inhabitants, chiefly foreigners, well supplied with all the luxuries of civilisation, and in constant touch with the world. It is the principal terminus of the Nitrate Railway, whose extensive workshops and foundries are here; it is the seat of a garrison, and of a large British colony.

Iquique is built, like most of the Chilean towns, in square blocks, and, for the most part, of one-storeyed houses, because of the frequent earthquakes. The houses are of timber, cemented and stuccoed, and often coloured cream, orange, or blue. The general effect is pretty, and is heightened by the trees, which are tenderly reared wherever there is soil enough for their roots. Of harbour proper there is none; but in the open roadstead lie countless ships of all nations discharging cargo into lighters, or waiting for the inevitable bags of nitrate.

These come down by the railway, which now climbs far up the mountain sides, and away into the bleak Pampas beyond. There lies the nitrate kingdom, the home of those "Oficinas," which were daily flaunted in the eyes of British capitalists and speculators a couple of years ago, and in which so many thousands of Britons are still interested.

The best, and certainly the most recent, description of the land of nitrate of soda, is that given by Dr. W. H. Russell in his "Visit to Chili and the Nitrate Fields of Tarapaca," published last year by Messrs. J. S. Virtue and Company; and we shall avail ourselves largely of his guidance.

From Iquique, the railway ascends by a steep gradient, so that you soon look down upon the town and upon the scene of some of the fiercest and most famous struggles of the Peruvian War. At seventeen miles a height of thirty-two thousand feet is reached, and here, at Santa Rosa, are some

famous silver mines. Soon thereafter are reached the great plains—the Pampas—which Darwin described as remarkable from being “covered with a thick crust of common salt, and of a stratified saliferous alluvium, which seems to have been deposited as the land slowly rose above the level of the sea. The salt is white, very hard, and compact; it occurs in water-worn nodules projecting from the agglutinated sand, and is associated with much gypsum. The appearance of this superficial mass very closely represented that of a country after snow, before the last dirty patches are thawed. The existence of this crust of a soluble substance over the whole face of the country shows how extraordinarily dry the climate must have been for a long period.”

As Darwin saw the Pampas, so are they to-day, save where they are broken by the railway, and scarred by the numerous works which have sprung up. At twenty-nine miles from Iquique is the Central Station—a junction from which a branch is thrown off to the port of Pisagua, and numerous small branches, to supply a crowd of neighbouring “oficinas” with communication and transport.

From this junction the main line continues northwards, and at about thirty-six miles from Iquique, reaches its highest point—three thousand eight hundred and eleven feet above the sea. The Pampas spread out on both sides in their dreary monotony, with here and there the ruin of some adobe building marking an abandoned native factory, the general aspect reminding the traveller of the African desert, and the barren shores of the Red Sea. On this saline desert there is an oasis, in the shape of a corrugated-iron hotel, supplied with all the edibles and drinkables of civilisation which can be conveyed in glass or tin. Around here and onward there is a constant succession of “oficinas,” or nitrate factories, for a distance of about one hundred miles from Iquique.

Eighteen English companies, as we have said, are among the owners of these “oficinas”; but there are also a score or so more in the hands of Chilean companies and individuals, whose aggregate output is not far short of the total of the English factories. The industry is thus a very considerable one, and it is computed to give employment to fully fifteen thousand persons.

And so these natural hideous wastes have been made the centre of active, in-

dustrious life, of innumerable villages of Chilean work-people, of trim bungalows of European officials, and of a ceaseless quest after profit for thousands of British shareholders.

It was over these awful Pampas—a stretch of country without a drop of water in view, or a leaf or a blade of grass, with burning sand under foot and a blazing sun overhead—that the Chilean troops pursued the allied forces of the Peruvians and Bolivians, in one of the most desperate campaigns on record. It was after the tide of war had rolled over the deserts of Tarapaca that they became the property of the Chilean nation, which now derives about a third of its revenue from the export duties on nitrate of soda.

The most northern port of the nitrate region is Pisagua—formerly a small Peruvian dead-alive town, now a second Iquique. It is one of the termini of the Nitrate Railway, which has more large storehouses and workshops here. The roadstead is open, and all the landing and shipping has to be done by boats run through the surf. The town itself follows the line of the shore, and the buildings are low, wooden structures, masonry for dwelling-houses being avoided in Chili on account of the earthquakes. The trade of the place is for the most part in the hands of English, German, and Italian firms. Pisagua was fortified during the war by Peruvian and Bolivian troops, but was captured by the Chilean fleet, which bombarded the batteries and then landed a force of two thousand men to dislodge the garrison. The capture of Pisagua was one of the feats of the war of 1879.

The loading at Pisagua, and at places where the surf will not allow the lighters to come close in shore with safety, is done by means of bladder-boats, called *boles*. Two long bladders, made from the skins of sea-lions, air-tight, water-tight, and duly inflated, are lashed together, with a platform on the top. On this five or six bags of nitrate are deftly balanced, so as not to get wet, and watching his opportunity, the *boles*-man paddles off with a receding wave and floats alongside the lighter waiting in smooth water. When the lighter has received her complement, she in turn is propelled to the ocean-vessel lying in the roadstead. The nitrate-porters and boatmen work about seven hours a day, hauling very heavy loads, on little other food than beans, of which, however, they consume a prodigious quantity.

Valparaiso is the commercial capital of Chili. It is here that the nitrate shipments are regulated, from here that the vessels are despatched to the various loading-places and commissioned to European ports, and here that the samples of the cargoes are tested and valued. It is an attractive-looking place as seen from the roadstead, with the background of rugged red mountains some twelve or fifteen hundred feet high, over which towers the white head of Aconagua—a mountain-mass twenty-three thousand feet high. Between the sea and the hills, and up the slopes and terraces, the town is built tier above tier, while the main street of shops, quays, and factories extends for miles along the shore. Access to the upper town and suburbs is gained by lifts from the main street, along which runs a tramway. Sixty years ago this main street was all there was of Valparaiso—indeed one side of it only, and two shops. Now it is a city of one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, with docks, piers, warehouses, colleges, schools, handsome shops of all kinds, hotels, clubs, theatres, railways, electric light and telephones. It has become the principal port on the West Coast of South America, and it has become so chiefly through British and American capital and enterprise. It is the centre not only of the commerce of Chili, but also of a large portion of that of Peru and Bolivia.

It is not, however, a model city. The streets are malodorous, the shore is lined with fearful drinking-dens, the prices for almost everything are exorbitant, and although it is the seat of administration of both army and navy, and head-quarters of the Department of Maritime Commerce, it has more than its share of crimes of violence.

The foreign population is large, and lives for the most part in separate communities, with their own clubs, hospitals, churches, and so on. Still there is a good deal of society, and a good deal of gaiety, in the suburban houses of the merchants built among gardens up the side of the hills.

From Valparaiso there is a railway to Santiago, the seat of Government, and the oldest city of Chili. The railway skirts the sea-coast, and then passes inland through well-cultivated country to Quillita, once the chief town of the country but now little known. Then it climbs up the mountain-side, crosses the outer range of the Andes, and descends into the plains which lie between the two great chains of

the Cordilleras. Here is Santiago, which was founded as far back as 1541, and where in the olden times the Spaniards were often closely besieged by the Indians.

Santiago is a great contrast to Valparaiso, and has more of the old tranquil *douce far niente* of the Spanish character about it. There are innumerable churches, a fine cathedral, an opera-house, clubs, hotels, restaurants, a fine Parliament House, a handsome and commodious railway station, and an incessant round of gaiety of a sort. The evening promenade is the great event of the day, and on the whole Santiago is a pleasant city to visit, with its curious commingling of the old world and the new.

Our notice of Chili would not be complete without reference to the great visitations of earthquakes with which it is favoured—or the reverse. The Chilians live in a chronic state of dread of earthquake—past, present, or expected—and they build their houses so as to afford the readiest egress and the smallest danger from falling material. In the coast towns they have regularly-appointed routes to places of refuge on the higher grounds, in case of the great tidal waves which so often follow the earth shocks. The natives are even more nervous than strangers about earthquakes, for they have all seen some of the ruin wrought by them, and they have heard from their fathers of the dreadful destruction of whole towns in times past. So, whenever there is a severe shock, they leave their houses and flock into open places. The minor kind of earthquakes are called *temblors*, and produce a shaking of the earth and a rattling of doors and windows, as of some heavily-laden waggon passing along the street. These are almost of weekly occurrence—sometimes three or four shocks in a day. Sometimes even a *temblor* will throw down a wall; but the *temblor* is nothing to the violent disturbances to which the country is always liable, when the land is torn with great fissures, and the sea recedes only to rush back with fearful violence to devastate miles of coast.

The political constitution of Chili is based on that of the United States, with some differences. There is representative government by Senators and Deputies, with property qualification of one hundred and four hundred pounds respectively. The electoral franchise is partly educational, partly property: that is, an elector must be able to read and write and must have

an income of at least one hundred and fifty dollars per annum. The executive Ministers are, as in the United States, appointed by the President, who rules for five years, and who, during his term of office, is pretty much of a Dictator.

President Balmaceda seems to have made the mistake of thinking that he could govern without the Parliament, and on his own responsibility alone; but the revolt of the Congress and the support it has received both from the navy and the people, indicate that the Chilians are too fond of constitutional government to be deprived of it with impunity.

The prosperity of the country depends on its mineral resources, and the Chilians are rather jealous that the development of these is so much in the hands of foreigners. Still, they have not been able to make much of them by themselves, and are not likely to allow political passion to altogether submerge political interests. Taxation is high; but the chief revenue of the country is derived from the exports, which are totally suspended during a civil war. The present revolution is full of anxiety, both for Chilians and for Britons, who are so deeply interested in the future of Chili.

COMPARATIVE POLITENESS.

WITH every disposition to be polite and well-bred, it is quite possible to fail in being so considered by the people amongst whom you may happen to be thrown by foreign residence or travel, owing to their and your misunderstandings as to what is really politeness and good breeding.

In this respect, there exist great differences between English and French—I might say Continental—points of manners and etiquette. If one man's meat is another man's poison, it is quite possible that one man's good behaviour may be another man's ill-behaviour. "They change their sky," says Horace, "but not their mind, who run across the sea"; but if they do not change their own mind, they certainly find a change in the minds, the manners, and the social usages of others.

It is as well to be aware of these differences which prevail when once the silver streak has been crossed. Are you sure you know how to behave properly on many an occasion, when your native town, county, or country has been left behind?

Please be so good as to excuse the question, because everybody does not know how when such a contingency happens to them. To point out instances in which they might be likely to err, both in public and in private life, might perhaps give great offence. It will be better, therefore, to put the inexperienced reader in the way of proving that he belongs to the civilised world abroad, by giving a few hints respecting the usages of society, as laid down by Madame La Baronne Staffa.*

The Baronne begins with the etiquette respecting births and christenings; but it is hardly needful for us to start quite so early in life's career. My younger readers will naturally prefer to know how courtships ought to be conducted, according to the regulations established in France, and probably more or less in other civilised nations of the European continent. But I doubt whether they, especially the young ladies, will approve these particular rules, because they confirm the belief that a French girl, whose face is her fortune, however well brought up and educated, has but small chance of finding a fitting husband.

That this statement is no calumny, is constantly evidenced by popular French journals, both serious and comic. The "Petit Journal," whose sale is considerably more than a million daily, publishes a feuilleton, or serial romance, entitled "Trois Millions de Dot," A Dowry of Three Millions (of francs), by Xavier de Montépin, a favourite author, whose inexhaustible talent, fertile imagination, and so forth, are lauded by the editor in the highest terms.

The "Journal Amusant" depicts a suitor, or his agent, closeted, note-book and pencil in hand, with the father and mother of the intended bride.

"We are to say, then, one hundred thousand francs?" he asks. "It is not much."

"But, you know, she is our only child. After us, she will inherit everything we have."

"At about what date, do you suppose?"

A little girl is trundling her hoop, in company with a young gentleman of her own age. After a few merry runs, she is so pleased that she says to her play-fellow:

* "Usages du Monde, Règles du Savoir-Vivre dans la Société Moderne," par La Baronne Staffa. Paris: Victor-Havard, 168, Boulevard Saint-Germain, 1890.

"You will be my little husband—won't you!—when I am grown up!"

"We shall see," he answers. "If you are very rich; yes, perhaps."

Two peasants meet in the village street. One, decrepit, crowned with a cotton nightcap, hobbles along with the aid of two sticks. The other, younger and stronger, communicates his views.

"My lad, Emile, has a great liking for Jules's daughter. But I had much rather that he should marry yours; because you are a great deal older than he is, and he won't have so long to wait for his expectations."

A husband and wife are walking in their garden, engaged in confidential chat.

"It will not be so difficult to settle Clara. She is a good-looking girl, and will go off with a reasonable dowry. But to Julie, who has lost all her front teeth, we shall be obliged to give twice as much."

"Suppose we buy her an entire set of false ones. That will be cheaper."

And so on, with variations in different styles.

This is the way in which a regulation match should be made. A young man has remarked a young lady, and wishes to obtain her for his wife; but he does not point-blank ask for her hand in marriage. That is, he must not pay court to his intended sweetheart, and obtain her consent directly from herself. Oh, no! It would be highly improper to make love in that simple and straightforward way, after the manner of Arcadian shepherds and shepherdesses. He must confide his intentions, first to his own parents, or, in default of them, to some aged friend or superior, whose intimacy justifies his taking such a step.

The person who has received the young man's confidence enters into communication with some intimate friend of the young lady's family, in order to arrange a meeting between the two young people, which will decide whether the project can be carried any further. That is, in other words, "trot him, or her, out." But before broaching any matrimonial scheme, the intermediaries are bound to obtain precise information respecting the fortune, the social standing, and even the genealogy of the two families in question.

Nevertheless, it is not always, perhaps not often, that the young gentleman takes the initiative at all. Relations and friends have come to the conclusion that Monsieur

X. and Mademoiselle Y. are a suitable couple in respect to position, possessions, and expectations; and, once decided, the thing is done, in accordance more or less with the formalities here described. And, in the majority of cases, a happy marriage is the result. In French middle classes, husband and wife regard each other as representing not merely a union of affection, but also a commercial partnership. Madame often thinks she has as much right in the shop or the counting-house as Monsieur has. And, in many cases, her influence and advice are exerted for good. Not unfrequently, she takes the lead, and maintains perfect acquaintance with and command over ledger and bank-book.

Those who intend making a Continental marriage are left to follow the Baronne's instructions respecting the subsequent steps of their project. It is strange that France should complain of her decreasing population, while her law does all it can to delay and to deter her population from marriage. The maintenance of parental authority seems to have been a greater object with her legislators than the legitimate union of loving couples. It may be supposed that the compilers of the Civil Code did not foresee the consequences of their work.

If a man of sixty has parents still living, he cannot marry without their consent except by sending them a "respectful remonstrance" through a process-server; and then he has to wait a certain time, if they persist in their refusal. If they are dead, he must produce certificates of their death; which may be difficult, inconvenient, or even impossible. Moreover, a marriage of mixed nationality, to be valid in France, must be contracted in strict conformity with French marriage law.

Passing on to another problem in politeness—the arrival of a stranger who intends to reside in a town or country neighbourhood—who is to make the first call or visit, with the object of thereby commencing acquaintance?

With us, the new comer waits to be called upon, unless bearing special letters of introduction to special persons or families. I knew, however, a good old curate who, arrived in a new parish, and finding that nobody came to see him, copied Mahomet's conduct with regard to the absent mountain, and that with signal success.

It is important to direct attention to this detail of etiquette, because the practice

on the opposite sides of the English Channel, like the side of the road you are to take in driving, is exactly the reverse the one of the other. And untoward misunderstandings have occurred from ignorance or non-observance of the established rule. One party has thought the other uncivil and inhospitable, because it did not receive the welcome expected by the stranger; the other party, namely, the old established residents, pronounced the new comer to be haughty and exclusive, because he made no move towards an interchange of civilities.

Our French monitress orders you, when you arrive in a new residence to pay visits to the people with whom you desire to open relations.

In order to re-enter the houses where you have been graciously received, as well as where you have met with no more than ordinary civility, you must wait till your visit has been returned. It may happen, nevertheless, that some affliction may have fallen on the house where you have called; or you may have to thank the family for some obliging act or service performed in your favour. In the former case, you should leave your card turned down at the corner; in the second, you pay a fresh visit, to express your thanks; and then you wait again.

Still, the persons whom you have been to see are not obliged to enter into relations with you. They are at liberty, in return for your call, to merely send you a simple card. You must not manifest the least resentment. "Sympathy is not obligatory;" but you will not return to those houses under any pretext.

In those first visits, the new arrival explains the reasons which have induced him to make the call. "As I have come to reside in your town or village"—giving the address of the house so occupied—"I have taken the liberty to knock at your door, and gratify my desire to make your acquaintance, after the favourable mention I have heard of your name—or because we are such near neighbours—or because I shall esteem it a great honour to know you."

In the course of conversation, you can impart such information respecting yourself as is likely to inspire confidence; you can offer satisfactory references. But unless you are a man of mark, bearing a well-known or official name, it is prudent to wait awhile before making these introductory calls. Local circumstances and

events will offer opportunities of friendly acquaintance with your neighbours.

We should scarcely expect that in India (Calcutta) the French rule should be followed rather than the English. Miss Umbers informs us, in her graphic and interesting "Overland, Inland, and Upland"—which gives a vivid picture of life in the East—that, if there are any formal calls to make, they must be performed during the interval between breakfast and tiffin—a most inconvenient custom, as it takes one out in the fierce heat of noon; but it is accounted for by the theory that every lady takes a siesta in the afternoon, and by the fact that everybody drives out in the evening. On further acquaintance, one often ascertains that people do not rest in the afternoon, and that these hours are consequently not tabooed with them; but a first or formal visit must always be paid about noon.

Another uncomfortable rule prescribes that new comers shall call first upon residents, instead of the contrary home-practice, so that the awkwardness of making way in an entirely new society is thrown upon strangers, who thus incur a three-fold risk: of calling upon those who consider it an intrusion; not calling upon those who expect it; and calling upon the wrong people first—a serious matter in a country where precedence is jealously insisted on. In up-country stations, offence is often given in this way; but Calcutta is large enough for a greater degree of freedom; and after leaving cards at Government House and the Bishop's Palace, it is not difficult to arrange one's other calls.

Let us suppose that the carriage has been duly ordered, the coachman has received, and understood, his directions, and the caller has arrived at the gate of the first house on the day's list. Here, perhaps, the horses are stopped, and the durwan—lodge-keeper, or hall-porter—comes to the carriage door with the concise announcement, "Darwaza bund"—literally, "The door is shut." This is the Calcutta substitute for the polite falsehoods used in England to keep out visitors at inconvenient times; and it saves a great deal of trouble. One has only to send out this order to the durwan, and it is his duty to see that no one enters the gates. The order being a general one, no offence is taken, and the caller merely leaves a card and drives away, unless she comes by appointment, or is sufficiently

intimate to write a message on the slate which the durwan generally produces in case of a parley. This, of course, calls forth a few words of explanation as to why visitors are not admitted, or procures an entrance. The carriage drives in, the durwan, or a bearer, shows the visitor upstairs, and the coachman and syce go to sleep on the box till the call is over.

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT.

By way of a cheerful walk one would not exactly choose the Old Bailey, where the Sessions House and Newgate Prison seem to have absorbed a coating of blackness and gloom that neither sun nor rain can bleach or brighten. The bustle of the sessions, even, does not make the place lively. The people who hang about the entrances, and confer at times with the policeman on guard, have a discontented, weary look; the prisoner on bail exchanging brief, impressive communications with a wife or a sweetheart, has little consolatory to say to the woman with the red, swollen eyelids. And Newgate and its surroundings lie like a great black blotch on a neighbourhood full of strenuous modern enterprise. Yet it is worth while to pass along the Old Bailey for the thrill that is inspired by the gloomy old prison, with the fetters festooned along its front, with the iron-bound door long disused that opens into mid air, where the scaffold was raised on hanging mornings. The carriers' carts that still load up for pleasant Sussex and Surrey villages among heaths and commons, in the open space under the prison walls, suggest more cheerful associations; and, coming into Newgate Street, old Saint Sepulchre's looks so big, and bright, and white, and clean, that, in spite of recollections of a doleful ditty about "When Saint Sepulchre's bell doth toll," it suggests rather wedding bells than dismal processions to Tyburn Tree, and the sight of a carriage and pair, adorned with white favours, rather strengthens this impression.

But we have nothing to do with Newgate Street except to get safely across it, and here is Giltspur Street, which was once Knight-riding Street, and which, by either name, suggests the gay procession of knights in damascened armour with golden

spurs, riding on to the jousts in Smithfield:

Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumph hold.

The object most characteristic in Giltspur Street at the present day is the "Watch House," just at the corner of Saint Sepulchre's churchyard, a small, circular building, the "Roundhouse," in fact, perhaps the very last relic remaining of the City watch—of the old Charleys, with their resonant call, that some yet living may remember to have heard when lying awake in the silent watches of the night. The Roundhouse, too, had an eye, no doubt, to the churchyard in its rear, where resurrection men might be at work on any dark night.

Here, at the end of Giltspur Street, is Smithfield itself, with its somewhat vague and unsatisfactory open space, designed neither for use nor ornament, with the meat-market opposite, stretching out plain and unlovely among surrounding buildings. And close at hand is the solid, heavy frontage of Saint Bartholomew's Hospital, with its courts and porticos, thronged by students this morning, gathered in knots and groups, and full of talk and chaff. In curious contrast to the classic contours of the buildings, is the little, old-fashioned church of Saint Bartholomew-the-less, which gives a kind of ecclesiastical or collegiate aspect to the precincts.

But beyond the hospital, visible over the roofs of a clustered mass of houses, rises a quaint brick, battlemented tower, with a bell-turret and a clock, a tower which has a battered, weathered appearance; so that although not exactly an antiquity—for the tower cannot be of earlier date than Queen Anne's time—it inspires interest as an old-fashioned relic of other days and other manners. But so compassed about with nests of dwellings is the quaint brick tower, that there is no visible way of getting at it, till a nearer approach reveals, among the houses and shop fronts that border that side of Smithfield, a charming old gateway, almost hidden under the projecting storey of a house above, and hedged about with shop windows, and advertisements of pickles and sauces; and on the twisted ironwork that fills the upper part of the arch you read that here is the entrance to the priory church of Saint Bartholomew. There is nothing more curious and

venerable to be seen than this in all London. The archway is of an elegant early English character, with dog-tooth ornaments, and mouldings, that, if somewhat battered and defaced, have all the more interest and artistic value on that account. For here the old gateway has stood ever since the days of Cœur de Lion and the Crusades, at all events, and all the pageantry of the passing centuries has passed it by. It has seen the jousts and tournaments in old Smithfield, which it first knew as a green meadow, with an elm grove, under whose shade the scholars of the City schools would meet and dispute in literary academic fashion. And when all the tide of chivalry had passed, and the tide of Reformation, too, with the martyrs' stakes, and fiery tortures of persecution, the fair still survived to keep up the memory of those old times; that great fair for cloth and draperies, which at one time brought cloth-weavers to London from all parts of England. The booths of the clothiers and drapers were erected in the churchyard, on ground now covered with houses, which still bears the name of Cloth Fair, and were safely locked in at night within the priory enclosure. But the business part of the fair was declining, even before the priory was dissolved.

Passing under the old gateway, Bartholomew's Close is entered, where once were ranged the dwellings of the canons regular of the priory. It is a quaint old place, all shut in, as it seems, although there are alleys and passages, known to the initiated, that lead in all directions—to the bustle of Aldersgate Street, or the quietude of Cloth Fair.

Even these old-fashioned timber and plaster houses have seen noble and distinguished tenants in the old Close. Here lived Lord Rich, that wily and perfidious lawyer, who was Henry the Eighth's Attorney, and afterward Chancellor, and who came in for the spoils of the priory. Among other things, he acquired the chartered right of holding the fair, which passed to his descendants, the Earls of Holland and Warwick, which rights were bought up by the Corporation of London about half a century ago, in order that the fair might be extinguished. And in Elizabeth's time, and the days of the Stuarts, there was no lack of distinguished residents round about, and starched ruffs and cloaks, and long rapiers and jewelled daggers, and fardingales and quilted petticoats, were as common in the neighbourhood as now

the workman with his basket, or the old woman, with all her worldly goods tied up in a handkerchief, looking out for a night's lodging. For the Close is no longer aristocratic, though still respectable, and is the seat of many useful industries, with a coffee-shop and lodging-house at the corner, and "rooms to let" announced in the window of a tall, upstanding tenement.

When you have crossed the top of the Close, you find yourself once again pleasantly surprised by a scene of unexpected interest. There stands the embattled brick tower at the end of a paved footpath; the path bordered on one side by a high wall, with monumental tablets scattered here and there, adorned with fragments of cherubim and fractured angels, while on the other side is a little enclosed churchyard, bordered by tall, old-fashioned houses, leaning this way and that. The stout old tower, with the soft and changing gradations of colour spread over the worn and weathered brick-work, supports what seems to be the gable end of the church, plain and unpretending with its plastered front and big ugly window of no particular order of architecture, and yet clinging to this, and embedded with and built into it, a tall old house, with its long low windows, stands corner-wise to the other houses, that look down upon the churchyard. And with a ray or two of spring sunshine stealing over the grey, softly-tinted, weather-stained walls, that throw a refracted gleam upon the tombs and the scaffold poles that are piled above them, there is something indescribably moving and pathetic in the whole scene. Everything is perfectly still and quiet, although we are almost in the very heart of London; the stillness is that of a cloister, the roar of London streets hardly penetrates to this secluded spot, and only the pleasant tinkle of a workman's trowel breaks the spell of silence.

At the foot of the old brick tower is a porch, where the door stands invitingly open. There is a funny door in the tower over our heads, which, opening into mid-air, suggests an easy way of getting rid of unwelcome guests. But such speculations are cut short by the view opening out from the entrance to the church. The element of surprise is again strongly present. Nothing in the exterior or the surroundings of the church gave a hint of such a scene as this. Here everything is stern, and grand, and massive. Massive

round columns support semicircular Norman arches, the triforium stage above is of the same stern and simple character, and the fabric terminates in a noble apse, where the arches are squeezed as it were into a narrow, stilted form, above which is a richly-ornamented arcade, while the clerestory is represented by quaintly zig-zagged panels.

Such as we see it here is the choir of the ancient priory of Saint Bartholomew, restored a good deal, no doubt, for the place was shamefully knocked about in times gone by; but in essentials the veritable building that echoed so long to the plain song of the old monks who sleep so peacefully under our feet. The choir is almost perfect. As for the nave of the old church, we may look for its foundations among the tombs in the churchyard we have just passed through. And the transepts—where are they, and the square, squat, central tower that once completed the edifice, after the regular pattern? Here is the arch of the north transept all blocked up with bricks and huge stones, while overhead rose the tower with its wooden, leaded spire, that was rather a source of weakness than of strength to the ponderous edifice. The south transept is all boarded up; but we are here just in time, for workmen are hammering away up aloft, and strip by strip the light matchboarding comes tumbling down, and presently the whole transept is revealed, all faithfully restored as it existed in the time of the old monks, with later monuments replaced as nearly as may be in their original positions.

That the transept is of lighter and more recent mould than the stern, simple, Norman choir, is to be attributed to one of the old Priors, who, under the inspiring influence of some great gift or legacy, set to work to lighten and modify the old pile, raising the roof and putting in a new clerestory, as well as raising the transept arches and remodelling the transept in the then prevalent style. So much we may read in the stones, and many other interesting records are to be met with of the same character.

The tomb of the founder, for instance, in a handsomely carved shrine of the fourteenth century, occupies one centre bay between the pair of round, sturdy Norman columns. And here lies the effigy of Prior Rahere, minstrel, it is supposed, and some say jester, at the Court of Henry the scholar: a pleasant-witted gentleman, Stow calls him. We may consider him as

the literary person of the period, not over rich, it seems, but having sufficient interest both in Court and City to obtain a site for a priory, and funds to build it. The church was completed, A.D. 1123, and may thus claim to be the oldest church in London—not counting the Chapel of Saint John's in the Tower, which may or may not have been completed earlier. But where so much has perished, the preservation of Rahere's tomb is a marvel; and although it has been restored and beautified at various times, it still retains, no doubt, its original features.

A beautiful oriel window of the Tudor period occupies the place of one of the triforium arches on the side opposite Rahere's tomb; and among its rich adornments appears the rebus of its builder—a hogahead or tun, transixed with an arrow or bolt—for Bolton, the last Prior, who had it constructed in communication with the prior's house which adjoined the church on that side, whence the Prior could see all that went on, without being himself observed. Most interesting, too, is the ambulatory which runs round the whole of the choir, with its massive arches, and powerful contrasts of light and shade. Here, to-day, an artist has set up his easel, and is bringing in the old apse with a monk and a fair penitent. And many a picturesque scene might be recalled, for these old walls make a true and exact setting. Such as the visitation of Boniface of Savoy, that vigorous and carnal Archbishop, who is said to have worn a coat of mail under his cassock, and who buffeted the sub-prior and the brethren, while his men-at-arms kicked and cuffed them all round. Or it might be a criminal flying to the altar for sanctuary, while the sheriff and his men are baffled in their hot pursuit.

Under the shadow of the ambulatory, too, are to be found many interesting monuments. A very fine one in coloured marbles, with gilded escutcheons, to Sir Walter Mildmay, one of Queen Elizabeth's trusted councillors, and a commissioner for the trial of Mary Queen of Scots. And there is a fine head in dark-coloured marble, representing one James Rivers, of Charles the First's time,

Torn from the service of the State in his prime,
By a disease malignant at the time.

This Rivers, by the way, was a descendant of one who was steward or surveyor to Edward Bohun, Duke of Buckingham—let

us hope not the unjust one, who, in Shakespeare's "Henry the Eighth," betrays his master to his doom.

Many other interesting monuments are there in this noble old church, which forms such a quiet, impressive resting-place in the midst of the busy wilderness of London. Not that it is particularly quiet at this moment, for the workmen are still sawing and hammering, and through the open door of the transept, where bright sunshine streams in, the masons are at work, and the mallet sounds, and chips are flying from the carved stonework. But all this is medieval in spirit, and harmonises with the spirit of these ancient walls. We seem to be assisting at the new foundation of the old priory, and the architect with his plans, and the tall parson in the cassock, and the people scattered here and there, looking on—allowing for trifling alterations in costume, are all sufficiently in keeping. And here we leave this splendid relic of other days, so altogether unique and unexpected, spared by time, escaped from fire and iconoclasts, from neglect and misdirected zeal as by a miracle. There is certainly nothing like it anywhere else in London; and no one can boast of being acquainted with old London who has not visited Saint Bartholomew the Great.

The surroundings, too, are very quaint and interesting. Cloth Fair, with its old houses, last relics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a fine old house actually clinging to the choir of the old church like a barnacle, and itself of considerable interest, with queer courts and alleys all about, lights, and shades, and colour for an artist, and quaint bits that in foreign lands one would travel far to see.

But the best thing that any one can do, is to forget all that he or she may have heard or read about old Bartholomew's; only moved by some kind of hypnotic influence to start some soft, fine, hazy morning, and following such indications as are retained in the mind, to find the way to Smithfield and old Bartholomew's, thus to enjoy the sense of something unique and unexpected, with all the attendant influences of the scene.

THE PRETTY FELLOWS.

THE history of the English swell has yet to be written. Under many different names, and in a great variety of costumes,

the swell, for centuries past, has flourished and played a leading part in the comedy of life. In one shape or another he is an ever present figure in the social kaleidoscope. His name is Proteus, for incessant change is the very essence of his existence. In the last century—a period often wrongly regarded as an age of stagnation and tame uniformity, when originality and inventiveness were not—the transformations of the beau were many. There were, among other varieties, the bucks and bloods, smarts and nerves, macaronies and jenny-jessamies, smart fellows, pretty fellows, and very pretty fellows.

The pretty fellows flourished from the days of Queen Anne to the latter years of George the Second. They were succeeded by the macaronies, and after the latter followed a long procession of dandies, counts, toffs, swells, and the Johnnies, chappies, mashers, and dudes of our own times. If the aim and end of a dandy's existence be, as Carlyle put it, "the wearing of Clothes, so that as others dress to live, he lives to dress," then the pretty fellows were dandies of the first water. They took infinite pains with their attire, and were adepts in all the mysteries of the toilet-table. Perfumes, washes, cosmetics were used to heighten their charms. The pretty fellow hid his pale face beneath as many varnishes as a fine lady. Lotions and unguents removed unsightly spots and the abhorred freckle. The dressing-room of one of these effeminate individuals was an arsenal of toilet artillery. Among many other weapons of offence and defence, the table was spread with lip-salve, eye-water, almond pastes, powder-puffs, and perfumes.

"But among many other whimsies," says a writer in the "Connoisseur," who has described the scene, "I could not conceive for what use a very small ivory comb could be designed, till the valet informed me that it was a comb for the eyebrows."

The dress of a pretty fellow was a matter of constant study and care. Embroidered coats, laced waistcoats—with gold-worked button-holes—and black velvet breeches, were his delight. For the last-mentioned garments, black velvet was for years the extremely fashionable material.

A description of a beau in "Mist's Journal," 1727, says:

"In black velvet breeches let him put all his riches;" and another satire of the same time puts the unanswerable question:

"Without black velvet breeches, what is man?"

Fine Mechlin lace to adorn the shirt-bosom and wrists, red-heeled shoes with brilliant buckles, and gold-clocked stockings rolled up over the knees, were also essential parts of the costume of the pretty fellows. Perukes with very long queues were the fashionable wear. They were heavily scented and powdered:

Mix with powder pulvil
And then let it moulder away on his shoulder.

Not only the peruke, but the whole attire was heavily scented. Musk, civet, and orange-flower water shed their fragrance on the air. In the fob of the laced waist-coat was a gold watch. The macaroni of a later day was accustomed to carry two watches, which seldom agreed; "one to tell him," as Walpole said, "what o'clock it was, and the other what it was not."

A sword and a snuff-box were necessary parts of our beau's equipment. A hilt adorned with rich filigree work, and an elegant sword-knot with gold tassels set off the weapon that no pretty fellow was ever man enough to draw. The snuff-box was in constant and universal use. Ladies as well as gentlemen snuffed incessantly. In public places, in churches, and in the play-houses, perpetual sneezing and coughing testified to the general devotion to snuff. The pretty fellow took his Scotch or Havanna, or his Strasburg, "véritable tabac," from an enamelled box, the lid of which was lined with polished metal, so that whenever the beau took a pinch he was able to enjoy the sight of himself in the mirror thus cunningly provided. Moreover, with every pinch he was able to exhibit his diamond ring and his lily-white hand.

When the pretty fellow took the air in the Mall or in the Park, he carried a long and slender staff, or sometimes a cane of curious make, which dangled from his wrist or coat button. As the manipulation of the fan was a matter of constant study and pride to the fine lady, so the right carriage of the cane was a mark of the finished beau. Pope has pictured him:

Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.

The long staff carried in the hand was often adorned at the top by a curiously-carved head of Gorgonian ugliness.

But it was not only in their dress and carriage that the pretty fellows proudly blazoned forth their love of effeminacy.

In imitation of the fashionable ladies, they received visits while sitting up, dressed in gowns, in their beds. They addressed one another by feminine appellations. Steele says that at White's and the Saint James's coffee-houses, he heard some of them calling to one another across the room by the names of Betty, Nelly, and so forth. They were accustomed to accost each other with effeminate airs, and, says Steele, "do a thousand other unintelligible prettinesses that I cannot tell what to make of."

In society the pretty fellows would sit with the ladies and sew or knit, or skilfully ply the shuttle and thread in the fashionable occupation of knotting. They took no delight in field sports or in study, in the strifes and emulations of the Bar or the Senate; but proudly boasted of their skill in knotting and in knitting, and of their achievements with the harmless, necessary needle.

The pretty gentleman spoke a clipped and delicate speech; he refined the vulgar broadness of the vowels. If he wished to compliment a lady, he would pat her on the shoulder, and remark: "I vew, me'me, yo're immoderately entertaining." In conversation he hardly ever ventured to express dissent; but if he did go so far as to say, "Oh! pard'n me, my dear! I ken't possibly be of that opinion!" it was only to flatter his collocutor by afterwards allowing himself to be convinced by superior reasoning.

Garrick dealt these effeminate pretty fellows a heavy blow in his farce of "Miss in her Teens." In the part of Fribble, a vain, empty-headed coxcomb, much troubled with weak nerves, he is said to have imitated as many as eleven well-known men of fashion so that every one in the house recognised them. This onslaught was followed up in 1747 by a satirical pamphlet called "The Pretty Gentleman; or, Softness of Manners Vindicated from the False Ridicule Exhibited under the Character of William Fribble, Esq." The anonymous pamphleteer, while professing to attack Garrick and to vindicate the pretty fellows whom he had held up to the laughter of play-goers, bitterly satirises their dress, manners, amusements, and speech.

But satire has never had more than a temporary effect on social follies. If some of the absurdities of the pretty fellows vanished, others remained, which, with new follies, completed the equipment of

the macaroni and his successors. Satirists, from Horace to Carlyle, may lash the folly of clothes wearers; but the dandy is always with us. From the days of Alcibiades, of Sardanapalus, and of Petronius, through numberless generations of beaux and every possible variety of affected foolishness in dress, manners, and speech, down to the more subdued and quieter-toned dandyism of the present day, the beau, or swell, or fop has always been a conspicuous figure in the endless dissolving view known as society.

THE CHIEF OFFICER'S WAGER.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III. HOW WE DID SENTRY DUTY.

It was much past eleven before I reached the ship. The drive should have taken thirty or thirty-five minutes; but a dense fog had come on, and my poor, blundering Jehu did not get to the dock much before midnight. He had been walking at his horse's head, lamp in hand, feeling his way along the edge of the side-walk, and the cavalcade had perforce been obliged to progress at snail's pace. I paid the fare, shouldered my bag, and passed through the ware-shed opposite to where the "Elsinore" was lying. But even then I could not see her. She did not loom through the fog, she was simply invisible; and I groped my way over the littered paving-stones with the pleasant foreknowledge that at any moment I might drop down twenty feet into the dirty water below. However, the precise whereabouts of the steamer was pretty firmly fixed in my mind, as a bang from a crane-chain had given me some bearings, and, after damaging shins and temper both over innumerable pieces of merchandise, I came across a gang-plank at last, and walked up it. But as I gained the deck, a large fist gripped my coat and a gruff, sea-hoarsened voice bawled out, "Got un, by thunder!"

There was a patter of feet along the greasy planks; a lantern flashed, and Travison's voice said:

"Hullo, it's you! All right, Marline; this is Mr. Henderson, one of the passengers."

"Sorry for manhandlin' yer so rough-like, Mr. 'Enderson, sir," growled Marline, in whose throat the fog was evidently playing havoc. "I thought you was the other Johnnie, an' I'd grabbed ten quid.

Will I take this yer portmante below, sir?"

"Yes," said Travison, "and put it in No. 18. Here's the key of the companion. Lock it from the inside, and be back again as soon as you can." The man went off on his errand, and the chief officer turned to me. "It's just the night for any one to creep on board; but there are four of us on the look-out, and, as I've got every hatch and skylight and door that leads below safely locked, there ought not to be very much danger. But still I can't help feeling abominably anxious and fidgety. What are you going to do with yourself? Turn in!"

"No; I shall stay with you, at any rate for awhile. And the dock authorities notwithstanding, I'm going to try and neutralise the effects of this foul atmosphere with some cigar-smoke. By-the-way, how is it that you are not taking in cargo? Full already?"

"Those confounded lumpers have struck. The brutes get two dollars and a half for a short day, and they want three for less work, which the dock company naturally refuse to give. It means delay, of course; and at another time I shouldn't care an atom; but now it is different, for every extra minute we are here gives Burgoyne so much the more chance to smuggle himself on board. Listen, there's somebody moving about. Oh, all right, it's only Marline."

"But don't the mails compel you to sail at a stated time?"

"We are not bound to go till the first tide on Sunday morning, and probably we shall hang on till then in the hopes that some of these ragamuffins may see fit to return to their work. But the Knights of Labour—hullo, what's that! Oar, by Jason! Here, you stay and guard this gangway."

And off he darted through the block of fog towards the port side.

I, on my part, heard, with a curious sense of impotence, the muffled footsteps of some one moving cautiously amongst the raffle on the wharf. But as the darkness was so intense that my own feet were invisible to me, a straining ear was the only organ to be relied upon. The wanderer, whoever he or she might be, suddenly became quiet; and I was beginning to speculate as to whether he had sat down, or gone into the ware-shed, or climbed on board the "Elsinore," when Travison returned.

"It was only some men in a Danish barque at the other side of the dock taking out a warp. Another scare all for nothing. And here am I for the fiftieth time since those dockers left, all in a cold perspiration. Good heavens, Henderson, you don't know what this business means! I wouldn't do it again for twice the money. A second dose would drive me into a lunatic asylum."

Marline came up again and took charge of the gangway, and we two felt our way about the decks, searching the boats, and sending lantern-rays into every nook and cranny.

"Why don't you warp her off from the dock-wall, and lie out in the middle?" I asked, as a sudden inspiration seized me. "We can't possibly keep a satisfactory watch along a beat of four hundred feet in all this murky blackness."

"No, worse luck. I thought of that this afternoon; but just as I was casting off my headfasts, a big steamer came in outside, and we were obliged to stay in order to keep the berth. You can't see her now, because of this infernal fog; but she is there fast enough—a dirty, lubberly Brazilian—and of course her people add to the confusion by making a turnpike road across our decks."

I murmured an expression of disgust, and we continued our promenade for some time in silence, pacing rapidly to and fro through the semi-solid air, with ears on the constant alert. Once Trivison motioned me to caution, and proceeded to dodge some one round the after wheel-house; the said some one also dodging him. There was a ruck, a grapple, and some strong language. The man was one of our own sailors. Twice we stopped and critically examined parties of the Brazilian people who were returning from a shore carouse, on one occasion nearly getting up a fight; and half-a-dozen times did suspicious wanderers on the wharf render our highly-strung nerves still more tense. One never knew what to expect next, and the suspense kept one in a constant tremble of uncertainty. I began to share Trivison's unhealthy excitement, and gave up all thoughts of bed for the present. I could vividly picture Burgoyne creeping on board under cover of the darkness in forty different disguises, and by forty different routes; and a vague foreboding seemed to tell me that he was somewhere in the neighbourhood. I mentioned this last feeling to Trivison, who admitted that it coincided with his own thoughts.

"Burgoyne is within a cable's length of us, of that I am sure," he said. "I can't give you any reason or proof; I can't give myself any; but I am absolutely convinced of the truth of what I say. You may call it 'second sight' if you like. Perhaps it's a slight disorder of the brain. I own to you that I am not myself. I never knew I possessed what are commonly called 'nerves' before; but they have come to the surface within the last day or two, and only to go utterly to smash, and let me tremble at a sound like the veriest coward. I'm not a gambler, you see, and I'm staking every penny I have in the world—savings from the best part of twenty years' hard, dangerous work. Burgoyne is a gambler professed. He is playing for, what is to him, a comparatively smaller sum; and he will be as cool over his moves as an iceberg. He has won the first point already. Thinking that all was fair in a fight of this kind—though I had a tough argument with myself first—I employed a private detective to shadow him; and as the fellow was supposed to be one of the 'cutest men of his trade in New York City, I thought there was little fear as to the result, especially as he had leave to get an assistant if he wanted one. But he was diddled by the simplest plan imaginable. Operations commenced on Thursday night. Burgoyne did this, that, and the other, in his usual way, went to bed, got up late next morning, walked into down town Delmonico's, and there gave my man the slip. He'd marched straight through, and gone coolly out at the other door."

"I saw him after that, you must remember."

"I know you did, and so doubtless have twenty other people. But up to eleven o'clock last night, the detective had not managed to hit off the trail again. He came here himself and told me; but I couldn't give him any useful instructions."

Once more we relapsed into silence. Day was beginning to break, and as the cold, grey light filtered through the yellow fog, so did the difficulty of seeing about the decks diminish. The muffled figures of the four watching sailors began to loom through the haze in blurred outline, and now and again we would notice a white feathery spiral of steam escaping from the slumbering winches. The air cleared more and more as the sun rose; and as it moved higher up, the mists disappeared completely. I pressed Trivison, who was looking terribly haggard and worn out, to go

below and snatch a rest, saying that I would keep careful ward in his absence. But he refused, and would not even sit down.

Presently, a dockyard official—a man in blue, with many brass mountings—turned up. The dock authorities had, it seemed, made special terms with their men to complete the "Elsinore's" lading, and soon the steam winches were rattling away again, and the holds were once more alive with scurrying stevedores. All went as merrily as could be till half-past ten, when a mandate arrived from the labour tyrants; and the dockmen, with visible regret, trooped off and left us to ourselves again.

But we were not in lonely security for long. Hardly had the last of the dockers cleared out of the sheds than a howling mob of a different class pervaded them. A Methodist New Connexion minister had, as I have said, taken passage on the "Elsinore" for a starring tour in England, and his congregation had come, apparently en masse, to see him off. He was a tall, handsome man of eight-and-thirty, and the lady with him proved to be his mother, and not his wife, as the shipping-clerk had given me to understand. And, perhaps, the personal advantages of good looks and bachelorhood added greatly in some eyes to the weight of this dissenting minister's spiritual attainments, for the larger part of his admiring attendants were women. This was a distinct annoyance from one point of view. The chief officer would have been fully prepared to forcibly refuse a mob of men permission to invade the deck, but he could not, after moral suasion had failed, resort to force against a phalanx of Amazons. The Captain, too, who arrived at this juncture, made things easier for the crowd by saying good-naturedly, "Oh, let 'em come, there's no one for 'em to hinder"; and in five minutes the seething mass of men and women had filled the decks, and were running riot all over the ship like a colony of rabbits.

We watched the gangways as well as we were able, scanning every male face with the most careful scrutiny. But a party of the more enterprising ones executed a flank movement, and, getting on another steamer that lay astern of us, crossed from her to the Brazilian, and boarded us on the port side before we knew what was happening. Even supposing Burgoyne had not passed either Trivison or myself, as he very well might have done in a good disguise, there was nothing to prevent his

slipping on board with this last batch. But though our defences had been overrun in the rear, we still maintained our vigil, in spite of my proposal to throw it up as useless.

"You do as you like, of course," said Trivison. "I am greatly indebted to you for staying so long, and if you want to turn in now, do so. Williams has got number eighteen ready for you. But I shall stay. This strange feeling with Burgoyne is near at hand has never left me."

"If you think it worth while to stay, so do I; though the sense of Burgoyne's presence passed away from my mind when the fog went. But what does this new power you seem to have developed show? I mean how far does it range? Does it assure you that Burgoyne is still off the ship? Or does it go still further, and comfort you with the certain knowledge that he is just imbibing his fourth cocktail at some swell Broadway bar, and bragging that he has never been beaten before?"

"No, worse luck. It merely tells me this. If a circle of two hundred yards radius were drawn, with myself as centre, Burgoyne would be somewhere or other within the periphery."

"Pooh! Simply imagination. You are tough as steel wire, old man, I grant, and you sailors are used to keeping your eyes open for long periods at a stretch; but a vigil as lengthy and wearisome as this has been, upsets your nerves just as it would one of us landmen. Now look here, lie down for an hour or so on that sofa in the deck cabin. You'll be ill if you don't, and I'll promise to call you at the least suspicion of Burgoyne in the neighbourhood."

"I may get ill, but I shall not desert my post. And," he went on, testily, "don't keep harping on this 'second sight,' as you term it, being merely a trick of the imagination. I tell you it is nothing of the sort. It is a power that has just been developed in me, and it is so new and curious, that I do not know how to work it to advantage. If I had had the gift a month ago, and developed its resources, I should be able to spot the exact place where Burgoyne is now."

"If you had had anything of the kind a month ago, you would have sworn off whisky, and got the doctor to give you a dosing," said I, rather unwisely.

"I hardly ever touch whisky, Hender-son, and you know it," he rejoined, angrily.

"And I must ask you to leave me if you can't let this subject alone."

He spoke with great irritableness—who would not have done so, after so trying a time!—and so wishing to avoid a quarrel, I strolled aft to where the dissenting minister was addressing his flock from the top of a saloon skylight. The man was a fine orator, and although the gist of his remarks might possibly have rubbed against my grain, I should perhaps have listened to him for a time, had not a figure amongst the audience arrested my curious attention. It was that of a man with such a pronounced stoop of the shoulders, that it was evidently an exaggerated one. He was wrapped in a long, dark ulster that reached to his heels, and wore a soft felt hat well down on his forehead. He was tall and broad—just Burgoyne's build; and when he attracted my notice, he was edging gently out of the crowd. His shining black eyes caught my glance—Burgoyne's eyes were black—and he immediately clapped a hand across the lower part of his face, and walked quickly to the companion. His movements were distinctly suspicious; and so, after waiting a moment or so, I followed him into the saloon.

My man had disappeared completely; run to earth in one of the cabins, perhaps; and the only person visible was a clerically-dressed individual, who was writing at the end table. That could scarcely be the same; but, to make sure, I spoke to him, asking if he had seen a tall, dark man enter the saloon a minute or so before. He turned round to me, showing a pasty face half-covered with short, red, bristly hair, and a pair of squinting eyes hidden, as though they were rare exotics, under glass. His dress was black and seedy; his voice might be described as gratuitously sanctimonious. He was certainly not the man I was looking for, and I was sorry in a moment for giving him the chance of rubbing up an acquaintanceship.

"M'yes, me friend," he said, "I saw the good gentleman of whom you make mention. I took it that he was a passenger like unto meself, who had fled here out of earshot of the lamentable schisms that are being preached by yon che-ild of wrath on deck. You too, I see, have sought refuge lest the accused heresies should defile your hearing. I trust, me friend, that I see in you a fellow-passenger who belongs to the ter-ne fold!"

He laid down his pen, and was evidently

hoping for a prolonged discussion. But I was in no mood for that kind of polemics just then, and, saying politely that I hoped our creeds were the same—though inwardly I did not think it at all likely that they were—asked which way the tall dark man had gone.

"He went, me friend, down that passage, yonder; and if, as I suppose, he is a friend of yours, I ter-ust you will present him to me, in order that we may ougel out together the great question that presses upon us."

I said I would see about it, and went down the passage-way with the full intention of never speaking to the squint-eyed man again. But, search and question how I would, the tall dark stranger was nowhere to be found. Williams had not seen him, none of the other stewards had seen him, and the purser said no such person had taken a passage. And so, convinced that he had not returned to deck again, I began to surmise that the mysterious person was no other than Burgoyne. Going to Traviison, I communicated my suspicions.

"Perhaps you are right," he said; "but, as you did not see his face, on the other hand you may be mistaken altogether. It is possibly some innocent man you were shadowing, who has gained the deck again further forward. Yes, of course, it did look fishy for him to hide his face, and I grant you if he came up the ladder by the hatch there, I should most probably have spotted him. But whether it is our man or not, I don't think it is any use your searching now. You would pass over three parts of the hiding-places, and I think I had better keep on the look-out here till we get clear away. Of course, when we are well at sea, I shall hunt through the steamer thoroughly."

CHAPTER IV. THE STOWAWAY.

SLOWLY that weary, weary day dragged itself through, and our incessant watch over the avenues of approach came to a close. The Methodist New Connexion minister's flock had for the most part dwindled away. The majority of the men had solaced themselves rather too extensively with cocktails and care-destroyers, and a cold drizzle of rain had damped the ardour of the women, viâ their finery. The last consignments of fresh victuals had been stowed in the ice-chamber; the canvas post-office bags were all locked

away in the mail-room. The doctor had long since finished his inspection of the steerage passengers; all was ready for leaving port.

About 11.30 p.m., a fussy, apoplectic little tug ploughed up to us across the dirty, oily surface of the dock. Steel hawsers were cast off from the bollards on the wharf, hauled on board, and coiled snugly away; the "Elsinore's" head was canted to port by the tow-rope, and the Captain on the bridge turned his engine-room telegraph to "Stand-by ahead!"

The Methodist New Connexion minister was waving last handkerchief-farewells to the knot of devoted women, who bravely held their ground to see the last of him; but, with the exception of a few from the steerage, all the other passengers were snugly below. The hour was too late, and the night too wet for them.

With slow, elephantine care, the ponderous steamer floated down the dock, now with her powerful engines standing-by ahead, now astern, and ever and anon receiving a helping hand from the panting little tug, which seemed at times well-nigh overcome by her straining exertions. We halted for a few seconds in the open lock, and half-a-dozen of those blue-clad, brass-buttoned gentry, whom one always associates with an ocean-goer in harbour, took advantage of the last opportunity of an early return to their hearths and homes. There was a small crowd assembled to see us through—why, Heaven knows, unless they had friends on board—and just as we began to gain way again, a couple of men rushed on board with a frenzied scramble. They were "pier-head jumpers"—belated stokers, both of them—who had been lingering in the whisky palaces till the last moment.

But neither was Burgoyne.

Slowly still, but with majestic ease, we passed out from the stone barriers, and soon quickening up to half-speed, glided gently down the placid waters of the Hudson.

Excepting that of Rio, New York Harbour is perhaps the finest in the world, and I have never tired of gazing at its beauties; but now, darkness and drizzle had blotted the scene completely, and the pilot was taking us through by instinct, and the bearings of an occasional light that glimmered through the haze. Travi-son stayed to see this professor of domestic navigation into his boat at the Hook, so as to guard against Burgoyne's

joining us even at that remote stage. But as in my mind there was little need for him, and none at all for me, to witness this ceremony, I just went below to number eighteen, and turned in. The sheets were clammy, as steamers' sheets always are; the blankets were thin and threadbare, as steamers' blankets are invariably wont to be; the mattress was like unto a badly-cobbled pavement, as steamers' mattresses have a way of being; but deadly tiredness triumphed over these trifles, and I was asleep in one turn over.

After a thirty-eight hours' tedious vigil, one takes little count of the hours that are being dedicated to sleep. I have since had reason to believe that the short hand of the saloon clock made a complete revolution between the moment of my turning in and the time when the knobby-headed steward entered number eighteen with a suggestion that I had better turn out again. But just then I fancied that my head had not been on the pillow three minutes. And so, although dimly conscious of the bustling one's presence, I deemed him but a creature of the imagination, and kept my eyes closed in expectation of some fantastic dream-romance. I heard him rattle about the cabin, which, being fitted in the usual style of backwoods luxury, did not take long to put straight; and then I heard him speak. He said something about breakfast, which my dozing brain elaborated into a lengthy harangue about the passengers, the crew, the officers, and the ship which bore them; he added a word or two about the lateness of the hour, which my mind spread into a lengthy dissertation on chronographs and chronometers; he made some polite query about the state of my health, which naturally suggested scientific diagnoses of endless length and complication; and then in the course of other communications he jerked out the word "stowaway," and my eyes opened with a snap. A bucket of sea-water could not have awakened me more thoroughly.

"What was that about Mr. Burgoyne!"

Williams stared, rubbed his knobby head with a lean, red hand in some perplexity, and enquired whether I would like a brandy and seltzer—or should he go to the doctor for a pick-me-up? He knew me too well to suspect sea-sickness, and evidently in his thoughts maligned my character by supposing that I had made a wet time of it at the leave-taking over-night.

"What were you saying just now?" I demanded.

"Honly that they was a 'avin' break-fas', sir. The Capt'n 'eard you singing out just now, an' sent me in to see what's along."

"Yes; but you said something about a stowaway. Is it Mr. Burgoyne?"

"Ay, Burgoyne was the name you was a-shouting out, sir, when I comed in. No, I don' know whether that's 'is name. I ain't seed 'im, sir. It's only one o' the deck-ands as passed the word just now that they'd nabbed a chap stowed away in the starb'rd coal-bunker. I unpacked yer portmantle, sir, an' put the things in the lower berth——"

"Does Mr. Travison know about this stowaway?"

"Lawd, no, sir. It's the third hoffer's watch. Mr. Travison's snoring away like a new-born hinfant. 'E won't be on deck again——"

"Cut along to his cabin and tell him immediately, and say I'll be round as soon as I've tumbled into some clothes."

"Werry good, sir," said Williams, dropping his chat when he saw there was something in the wind. "Nothink helse you require?"

"No, nothing. Go along." And Williams went. I slipped a coat and breeches over my pyjamas, shuffled into some slippers, and sped off to the chief officer's cabin. But he had left it already. Up I went on deck. No Travison was in sight, but Quartermaster Marline, with a stare at my excitement, told me he was forward of the funnel.

Yes, there he was, dressed with sailor's quickness, though in deshabelle like myself, and coming towards me. Behind him were two seamen, with a ragged coal-grimed wretch between them. A glance at the latter rendered Travison's "not our man" superfluous, and with a sigh we both went below again to resume our toilette operations.

"If that poor fool's brains were clever enough to smuggle him on board," said the chief officer as we parted at the bottom of the companion, "there is little fear of a clever fellow like Burgoyne being left behind. I knew it. That 'second-sight' you jeered at tells me that he is still close at hand. However, he hasn't won his money yet. I'm on duty again directly; but I shall be free in the afternoon, and we will make a thorough search of the ship then."

CHAPTER V.

HOW WE SEARCHED THE SHIP.

OF my fellow-passengers, Staynes, the Methodist New Connexion minister, turned out to be a very decent man indeed. He was well-informed, affable, and witty; and he grew extremely popular with the rest of the saloon's occupants. His mother, a white-haired old lady, was silent and harmless. The boy was a nonentity. But the other brother—or cousin, should I say?—of the cloth, was a very different stamp of man. Within twenty-four hours he had raised a barrier between himself and every one else on board. He commenced by attempting to patronise us, and finding that resented, viewed us as pariahs. What his particular cult was no one discovered, and he did not explain. He confined himself to groaning and calling us goats; the which is not a lucid description of a preacher's creed. He also made a point of keeping as much of the saloon table as possible between himself and his nearest neighbour; a proceeding which pleased all parties.

But when Travison said to me, "I'm going to search the ship now," and I chanced to look towards the glass over the writing-table at which this peculiar person was sitting, there was mirrored there a sight which startled me. The squint-eyed man was squint-eyed no longer. His eyes were as straight as mine; and they were black—black like Burgoyne's. Moreover, he was looking at my reflection with a broad grin that was by no means the sickly, sanctimonious simper that he put on before an audience.

In a quick whisper I called the chief officer's attention to this phenomenon; but when he looked, the squint-eyed man's face had resumed its normal conditions.

"Pooh," he said, "the leopard cannot change his spots. You must have been mistaken."

I thought otherwise. But as the eyes were converging once more, and, as the mouth had resumed its old expression of pseudo-sanctity, the proofs of my assertion were gone. So I said, "Ah, perhaps so," and followed Travison to the engine-room, intending to keep a sharp watch on that squint-eyed man for the future.

Amongst the moving labyrinth of polished metal that drove the "Elsinore" along her track, we did not spend much time. No one could secrete himself there.

But away down in the glowing, swaying cavern beneath the water-line, in that place of scorching heat and icy draught, in the huge laboratory where breath was made for the pulsing engines above, we made extended search and enquiry.

Never had I been in a stoke-hole before; devoutly do I hope it may never be my fate to go there again. The place is a very inferno. We were not steaming under forced draught, and the hatches and ventilator were open above; but the air was dreadfully oppressive. The blaze from the furnace doors as they were opened, weirdly lighted up the perspiring half-naked forms of the men who were throwing coals into the greedy maws, and threw strange fantastic shadows on to the dusty air beyond. Reeking slush-lamps gleamed on swart, sweating coal-trimmers bringing fuel from the vast store away in the darkness. The roar of the flames, the clatter of iron implements, the crash of falling coal, the hoarse shouts of men, made din indescribable. And what with that, and the odour of humanity, bilge-water, and oil, mixed with the all-pervading coal-dust, I began heartily to wish myself on deck again.

Presently, with a grimy stoker as a guide, we began a climb over crumbling mountains of black stones, penetrating every corner of the bunkers, and begriming ourselves to the eyes. Next, scrambling down again, we descended to a passage beneath the nethermost hold—I had nearly written hell—through which the shaft ran, and explored that, and closely questioned the greaser on duty. Then, after narrowly inspecting the steerage and intermediate quarters, bread-room, pantries, ice-chamber, and a host of other places, we came to that sailor's drawing-room, the fore-castle.

A double tier of bunks ran round the sides, and a few hammocks swung from the deck-beams, some tenanted, most empty. Sea-chests, gunny-bags, and divers other types of marine portmanteaux, lay about in orderly confusion. Some suits of oilskins hung like grotesque suicides from eyebolts overhead. Here and there in the dim daylight we could see half-clad sailors sitting about, smoking, mending their clothes, doing nothing. The buzz of conversation which rose hoarsely above the constant hammering of the seas on the iron plates without, ceased when the chief officer's form was seen descending the ladder, and a squat old Scots quarter-

master, with a face like a moist walnut-shell, scrambled to his feet to see what was wanted.

"Stowaway doon heer!" He grinned at the absurdity of such a notion. "Ye might as weel speir fer an iceberg, sir. Ay, sairch an' wailcome; but ye'll find naught. Sailor-folk 'ud liefer harbour fleas than sic creepin' cattle amang them."

Travison had a good look round, and then rejoined me at the foot of the ladder.

"Look here," he said, "would any of you lads like to earn a hundred sovereigns for saying three words?"

There was an amazed stare from every man to his neighbour; and one of them, a German, whipping a sheath-knife from his belt, held it out, as much as to say, "were the words anything in that line?"

"I have reason to suppose," the chief officer went on, "that we have still got a man stowed away on board who has no business here. Some of you know him. He has crossed in the 'Elainore' before—Mr. Burgoyne. Now he has no right here. But setting aside that part of the question for a moment, I am heavily interested in him on a personal score, so I will offer a hundred pounds to the first man who brings me news of his whereabouts."

There were some joyful exclamations at this, and several men jumped to their feet as if to commence an immediate search. But Travison motioned them to silence.

"Wait a minute," said he. "This Mr. Burgoyne is a rich man. He will very likely offer twice that amount if his finder will help to keep him hidden till after we have cleared Queenstown. So I'll put another offer on top of the last. When Mr. Burgoyne is found, I will distribute five hundred pounds amongst the rest of the crew. So the man who plays into Mr. Burgoyne's hands had better look out for squalls when his mates hear about it."

The men gave a rambling cheer of satisfaction, and then commenced hurrying sea-blessings on the head of "any swab who dared bear a hand to keep that skulker under hatches a bell after he was sighted."

We went on deck again, and I congratulated Travison on his move.

"He may have bought over two or three of the crew," I said, "or maybe even half-a-dozen. But he can't have tampered with the whole lot. Depend upon it, if Mr. Burgoyne is on board, he will be hunted out of his hole before dinner to-night."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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CROSS CURRENTS.

BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV.

"NELL! Nell! Humphrey! Where are you both? Don't you know it's breakfast time? Dear me," falling into a lower tone of speculative soliloquy, "what are engaged people made of? Even Helen never knows when it's time for anything. Ne-all," and the voice rose to a sweet, clear call again. "Ne-all!"

Selma was standing alone on a smooth grass terrace looking over a large, rambling wilderness of a garden beautiful in brilliant July sunshine. Behind her was a long, low house built of stone, which had grown grey and weather-beaten with three hundred years' exposure to wind and weather, and which was now tenderly sheltered from further rough usage by luxuriant climbing roses and wisteria which peeped in at the mullioned windows, and reached even to the quaintly-gabled roof. It was one of those old manor houses to be so often met with in the west of England, some of them degenerated into the merest farm-houses, many of them rapidly going to decay, but one and all pathetic survivals of a race of country gentlemen which has completely died away. Selma had made a temporary speaking-trumpet of her two shapely hands—which were a little tanned as though they had felt a good deal of sunshine lately—her head and figure were slightly thrown back, and she was preparing to repeat her call when

a girl of about sixteen appeared in the doorway of the house, and ran out to her.

"I see them, Selma!" she cried, "at least we did from the window upstairs. Shall I go and call them? You'll never make them hear!"

"Oh thanks, Nettie," returned Selma, gaily, "let us go together, shall we? It's easier for two than for one. Which way? In the orchard? Oh, come along!" And she ran swiftly along the grass, followed by her cousin—a large, brown-haired girl, who regarded all her movements at all times with a mixture of admiration and awe. They had nearly reached the orchard gate, and Selma had just pulled up with a merry laugh at the breathless Nettie when they became aware of Humphrey and Helen coming to meet them across the orchard, under the gnarled old apple-trees.

"You dreadful pair!" called Selma, "can you actually forget breakfast—in this air, too! I've been shrieking, and shrieking for you; every one else has nearly finished. Fortunately Nettie was late as usual, and she saw you from her window. Humphrey, will it hurry you in the least if I tell you that Roger is coming home?"

"Roger!" exclaimed Humphrey in a tone which was very seldom heard from him—a tone of lively excitement. "Coming home! You don't mean that, Selma!"

"You'd better make haste and ask Uncle Dick," she said, mischievously. "Perhaps I've made a mistake. Come along, Nettie," and she vouchsafed no answer to the questions showered on her by Helen and Nettie, making only laughing and evasive retorts aimed at the quiet Humphrey who had retired into his usual

shell of reserve, but whose steps were considerably quicker than usual.

The sunny dining-room, as Selma opened the door, seemed to be overflowing with noise and laughter proceeding indiscriminately from two rows of boys and girls of all ages, over whose tea and coffee Mrs. Cornish was presiding with motherly calm and decision, though her face this morning was rather flushed, and her hands hardly as dexterous as usual. Her husband, at the other end, seemed to be rather overwhelmed by the incessant applications he received for the viands he was dispensing. Mr. Cornish was not in the habit of coping with the full force of his family; he usually met them in detachments only.

They were a straight-featured, fresh-coloured family as a whole, with the exception of two school-boys of thirteen and fourteen who had developed, quite unexpectedly, sandy hair, and whose mischievous, good-tempered, irregular features were invariably adorned with freckles. Sylvia, the eldest unmarried daughter, a girl of twenty-two, who was sitting at her father's end of the table looking after the younger ones, with the baby of the family by her side, was perhaps the most perfect specimen of the family type. She was tall and well-made, with waving brown hair of the ordinary English kind; her brown eyes were clear and well-opened, and rather inexpressive, and her pretty pink-and-white features were not easily moved; her mouth was like her mother's, kind and decided, but neither sensitive nor sympathetic.

The appearance of Selma and Nettie, followed by the defaulting Helen and Humphrey, was the signal for a chorus of some dozen voices all uplifted in announcement of the same piece of news, "Roger's coming home!" and as Helen took her place by her aunt, Humphrey went round to his father and took the open letter held out to him.

The Roger whose home-coming was thus vociferously announced was the present Mrs. Cornish's eldest son. As a good-tempered, sunny-faced boy of fourteen, with no aptitude whatever for books, he had attracted the attention of his godfather, a practical, observant man, who was going out to New Zealand as a colonist. He had offered to take the boy, who was tall and well-grown for his age, and put him in the way of making a fortune for himself in some twenty years' time. Mr. Cornish was a barrister, and his practice—large as it

afterwards became—had not at that time kept pace with the growing demands of his family. It was very difficult to say what was to be done with Roger if he continued to smile good-humouredly on his school examiners instead of answering their questions; and, after much anxious thought, and with the greatest reluctance, his parents at last gave in to the boy's own earnest entreaty, and let him go. Twelve years had passed since then, and the boy had never been home since—the boy who went away with his young face so white and set in his determination not to cry under his mother's farewell kisses, would never come home any more. But the man who had taken his place was now actually on his way back, and it was no wonder that Mrs. Cornish's eyes were bright and moist as she returned Helen's congratulatory kiss.

"Thank you, my dear," she murmured, as she squeezed the girl's hand tightly for a minute. "Yes, he will be in England in about a fortnight, he says. My dear boy!"

And then a sudden shriek from all the younger members of the party at once recalled her to her practical, everyday self again.

"Mother, can't we go for a picnic! Can't we go to Blue Rocks because Roger is coming home?"

The house Mr. Cornish had taken for August and September was in one of the prettiest parts of Somersetshire, about two miles from the coast. Roomy as it was, the Cornish family, in the exuberance of their holiday spirits, seemed to fill it to overflowing, and the graceful, old-world associations which lingered round its old oak fittings and its oriel windows, were somewhat rudely dissipated by cheery young voices and restless young feet. Only Selma seemed to harmonise with those quaint, suggestive old rooms; and Humphrey had surrounded himself and her with an atmosphere which was almost eerie in the eyes of his brothers and sisters by sketching her several times as his imagination saw her in those old rooms in bygone days.

The country round, both coastwards and inland, was very beautiful. One of the younger Cornish boys had announced it as his conviction that it had been planned by a beneficent Providence for the express purpose of giving people "jolly places to spend the day in"; and Humphrey, on hearing this announcement,

had considerably mystified its author by giving it as his opinion in a few whimsical words, which he dropped into the talk going on about him with no apparent destination for them, according to his custom, that it had been arranged to withhold man from wasting good canvas and paint. There were heathery hills to climb; there were shady woods to explore; there were, as the same acute young Cornish boy expressed it, "jolly old ruins where one can poke about for ever"; and, above all, there was the sea.

Blue Rocks was the name of a little cove about eight miles from the Cornishes' house—which was known round the county as the manor house—one of the most delightful little places in the neighbourhood. It was ten miles from a railway station, and three miles from even a cottage, which was an advantage inasmuch as "trippers" were never to be met there, and a disadvantage inasmuch as a picnic there was rather an undertaking. As Nettle Cornish remarked, however, later on in the day, "Mother would have let us go anywhere to-day!" and Blue Rocks was popular with the whole party.

It was very hot, even by the sea, that day, and after the drive in the morning sun, and the dinner on the sands, with all the excitement incident on such a proceeding, a hush came over the picnic party—a hush only to be met with in the neighbourhood of the Cornish boys and girls, when their irrefragable holiday spirits were overcome with sleep.

The first to finish her share in the general siesta was Selma. She moved, stretched her pretty arms above her head with a little yawn, and looked about her. Two of her girl cousins were near her, one apparently absorbed in a book, but really fast asleep, the other, not attempting to conceal or disguise her slumbers. Selma sat motionless for a little while, leaning back against her rocky couch, and her dreamy eyes grew rather wistful as they rested on the pretty, sleeping faces. There was a distance between herself and her cousins which, try as she might, she could never bridge; and it was one of her inconsistencies to be always vaguely distressed by it. All her brightness could never make her one of them; and there came to her now and then moments when her girliness felt keenly what she could never have defined to herself—that never while girlhood lasted could she be quite as other girls.

The wistful eyes wandered away presently and fell upon little Elsie, the five-year-old pet and plaything of the entire Cornish family, the only moving figure visible as she played happily with the plaything she loved above all others—sand. Selma's eyes brightened as she saw the little figure; she raised her head, and, leaning forward, called softly:

"Elsie, come and play with me."

Elsie looked round as the inviting voice fell on her ears, in large-eyed, wondering surprise. She was a pretty little fair thing, and she regarded her beautiful cousin at all times with an awe and amazement which all Selma's advances could not overcome. Selma was always pretty with children, but she could never make them at home with her; she never could understand the reason, and the expression in Elsie's face as she looked round—coming on her own thoughts of a moment before, as she watched her sleeping cousin—hurt her. She rose, and going to the child, knelt down by her on the sand.

"Let us go for a little walk, Elsie," she said, softly, quite unconscious that her beautiful, appealing voice bewildered the little, fair head, as mysterious music might have done. "We are all alone together, you and I. Every one else is so sleepy. We must keep each other company. Where would you like to go?"

Elsie made no answer. Her eyes were fixed on her cousin with something fascinating in their blue depths.

"I know!" went on Selma. "You would like to go up into the little wood where we saw the squirrels as we came this morning, wouldn't you, Elsie?"

Elsie's cheeks grew pink. To see the squirrels "close" had been her heart's desire since the fleeting and fascinating glimpses she had had of them from the carriage as it drove past the wood in question in the morning, and after a moment of struggle her longing conquered even her shyness of Selma.

"Yes," she whispered.

"Then we'll go together now," returned Selma, happily. "It's quite close, and we shall be back in time for tea. It will be lovely, won't it?"

Elsie seemed to think it, on the whole, a doubtful joy; but she thought again of the squirrels, and put her little fingers into Selma's outstretched hand.

Helen and Humphrey strolling along the cliff above saw them start hand in hand, Selma in her blue cotton frock and shady

at, with her graceful head bent towards the small figure by her side, in its little ink smock and big sun-bonnet, with its serious face lifted shyly and dubiously to the lovely eyes above it, and smiled involuntarily at the sight. Their faces had been rather grave—very few words had passed between them since dinner, and there was something in the way in which Helen pressed the arm through which her own was passed, something in the clasp in which he held her hand suggestive of a mutual difficulty and a mutual comfort.

They had been engaged now for more than two months, and Mrs. Cornish, strongly disapproving of long engagements, had been anxious for some time that something definite should be settled as to their marriage. The income brought by Humphrey by his profession was at present quite insufficient to support a wife, and Helen had something of her own, and Mr. Cornish, urged thereto by his wife, had offered to make his son an allowance which should make the joint income sufficient to marry on. But to Mrs. Cornish's extreme indignation, Humphrey had quietly refused his father's offer. He could not marry on such terms, he said; he intended to wait for his wife until he could keep her himself.

Over and over again, since his refusal had been made known to her, his step-mother had argued the point with him, and only the day before they had had a long discussion on the subject—if that could be called a discussion to which one party contributes a long harangue and the other monosyllabic and perfectly even-tempered and courteous responses. She had asked him what he proposed to do, supposing he never "got on," and never did any pictures, and he had only smiled. He had pointed out to him that she considered it quite unjustifiable of a man to propose to a girl and then keep her waiting indefinitely, and he had answered that Helen was content; and when, in utter desperation, she had informed him that she should speak to Helen, he had quietly intimated that she was of course quite at liberty to do as she pleased. She had spoken to Helen, and Helen had proved as practicable as Humphrey. She would wait contentedly, she said, quite happy in Humphrey's love and trust, until he wanted her.

She had said the same thing to Humphrey himself, very simply and frankly as they walked up and down on the cliff together,

and the silence which had succeeded her words and his answer—more eloquent even than speech—lasted until Selma's voice, as she passed with Elsie under the cliff, roused Helen. After a glance at Humphrey's grave, preoccupied face, she broke the silence by saying, cheerfully:

"Humphrey, I've been going to ask you so many times what you think about Selma. Do you know I don't know at all?"

"What I think about Selma!" he responded absently. His thoughts were still fixed on the consideration of their own future—the long probation before him, and Helen, partly to draw him out of his depression, and partly because she was really anxious for an answer, went on:

"About her—her powers, I mean, dear. She always seems to me beautiful, and—and wonderful, you know, whatever she does; but I sometimes think I can't judge of her quite, because she is—Selma!" Helen propounded this theory with perfect simplicity and gravity, as if it contained a profound revelation. Humphrey looked at her seriously-considering face with eyes which were very tender and amused, and she went on, "Oh, Humphrey, do you think she will be happy?" She looked up at him as she spoke the last words, and it seemed to her that his face grew grave. "You do think she has talent?" she repeated, with a little hesitation in her voice, half anxious and half proud.

"I think she has genius, Nell."

"Oh, Humphrey, do you really?" cried her sister with a bright flash of pride and joy on her cheeks. "And you think she will be happy?"

Humphrey did not answer at once, and Helen, watching his face, tried in vain to read its expression. At last he turned and looked at her with a slight smile, which struck her vaguely as being, as she expressed it, "sad somehow."

"I have told you that I think she has genius," he said.

"Then she will be a success?"

The same smile touched his lips, but his voice was curiously relieved, as though her last question was easier to answer, as he said instantly, "Yes."

Helen heaved a little sigh of satisfaction, and said no more. She was satisfied as to her main point, and though she was vaguely conscious that she did not quite read Humphrey's face, she was well accustomed to the fact that many of what she defined to herself as "Humphrey's fancies"

went over her pretty, practical head, and that their love for one another was quite untouched by it. Once, early in their engagement, when he had told her what it was to him to talk to her about his work, she had looked at him with her simple blue eyes full of wistful anxiety.

"Humphrey," she had said, "I'm afraid I don't always understand." And Humphrey's eyes had satisfied her on that point for ever, though his lips said only two words. "You care."

While Helen on the cliff was having her mind so far relieved as to her sister's future, Selma herself was giving her whole mind to the entertainment of little Elsie, who trotted along by her cousin's side, along the sands, and up the footpath to the road, silently and gravely. She told the child wonderful histories about squirrels and fairies, imagined and related with a charm which older people than Elsie would have found it difficult to resist; she showed her flowers growing in the hedgerows, and birds flying among the branches, and by degrees she was rewarded by little shy answers, and laughter, and a more confiding touch of the small hand she held, until, as they entered the cool wood, with its moss-grown banks, and tall, gently stirring trees, its little rippling streams, and its wonderful ever-shifting light and shade, above all with its population of squirrels, the little thing forgot her shyness altogether, and chattered, listened, and laughed, "as though I were Helen or Nettie," thought Selma, delightedly. They were so happy together—Elsie so enraptured with the "skirrels," who seemed to be out in unusual force that afternoon, and Selma so pleased at being able to satisfy her—that they went on and on without thinking of time, and when Selma stopped at last to look at her watch, she found that it was nearly five o'clock.

"Oh, Elsie," she said, "we've come too far."

Elsie's little face grew suddenly grave. The sudden stop, and Selma's tone—more dismayed than she herself knew—had awakened her to the fact that she was all alone with Selma, and a long way from her natural protectors, and her tea.

"Tea will be waiting for us," went on Selma, brightly. "They'll never guess where we are, will they, darling? Come, Elsie, and let us see how fast we can walk. Oh——" she stopped short, looking consideringly at

a path which joined the road close to where they stood. "I wonder whether that would be a short cut," she said, after a moment; "is it too steep for you, darling, I wonder?"

They were on the side of a thickly-wooded hill, and the path in question went straight down it, while the road by which they had come wound round for a considerable distance. Both path and road evidently led eventually to the main road by which alone they could reach the shore, and the path obviously saved at least twenty minutes' walk. Selma glanced at the serious little face, and thought that the child looked tired; she was afraid, too, that if they were missing at tea-time, Mrs. Cornish would be anxious about Elsie, and she determined to try it.

"It's a beautiful little road, Elsie, isn't it?" she said, cheerfully. "Right through the squirrels' homes. Come along, darling!" But before they had gone very far Selma began to wish that she had kept to the road.

The path at first was fairly wide, but it was rough and uneven, and in spite of all her encouragement and help she felt the child's steps grow slower and more uncertain, and her ear caught a little ominous catch in the breath as the little feet stumbled now and then over a more than usually rough piece of ground.

At last, when they were nearly half-way down, one of these stumbles was nearly a fall, and the catch in the breath became a little sob.

Selma stopped.

"Elsie, darling," she said, "shall we go back to the road?"

And then, to her unspeakable dismay, the little hand slipped out of hers, and Elsie dropped into a sitting posture on the path, and burst into piteous little sobs and tears.

"Elsie's frightened," she sobbed. "She's tired. She can't do on. The ground's all little hills, and she wants Sylvia. Oh! she wants Sylvia."

Selma fell on her knees beside her, and took her remorsefully into her arms.

"Elsie, sweetheart," she said, "don't—oh, don't! I'll take you to Sylvia; I truly will. Oh, my darling, don't cry!"

But Selma, in spite of all her efforts to that end, had never been regarded by Elsie in the light of a familiar friend, and the disconsolate little weeper refused to be comforted or reassured by her now, looking upon her indeed as a fascinating but

deceiving vision, who had lured her away from Sylvia, her own especial comforter. She refused to contemplate the possibilities alike of going on or of going back; and as she was a delicate, excitable little mortal, the more she wept the more utterly unnerved she became, and the less heed she paid to poor Selma's distracted representations. Selma kissed, coaxed, reasoned—it never entered her head to scold—and Elsie wept more and more bitterly. Slight and fragile as the child was, Selma dared not attempt to carry her either up or down that steep, uneven path; and, ridiculous as was the position, she was nearly at her wit's end. She determined on a last appeal.

"My pet," she said, putting both arms round the sobbing child as she knelt on the path beside her, and pressing her lips tenderly to the little tear-stained cheek, "try and stop crying—only try. I'll go down backwards, and hold your hands tight all the way, and then you can't be frightened. Trust me, darling, won't you? I wouldn't have you hurt for anything. Oh, sweetheart, won't you? Won't you try?"

She had an answer, though Elsie only cried more piteously than ever. A man's voice from below said suddenly:

"Is anything the matter up there? Can I be of any service?"

RIVERSIDE RAMBLES.

MOST lovers of old Isaac Walton will agree that fishing is the first of riverside amusements. The fox-hunter may sneer at it as being a poor sport, and the shooting man may echo this unthinking condemnation; but to him who reasonably pursues the gentle craft, fishing is as pleasant as either of those pastimes; and it has the further merit of fostering a love of Nature, and facilitating greatly the study of her works.

Fishing is essentially a quiet occupation. There are books in the running brooks which only fishermen can read; and there are sermons in the stones flung at a sulking salmon, whereof fishermen alone can judge the weight and efficacy. The sport can be enjoyed without the banging of a gun, or the frightening "wild halloo and brutal noise" of fox-hunting. The fly-fisher who wades along the middle of a stream has unrivalled opportunities for noticing the

birds and little beasts upon its banks; and if he has the wisdom to use his eyes and ears, there are many sights and sounds which cannot fail to give him pleasure.

These few words are prompted by my spending some half-hours lately with "The Riverside Naturalist,"* a recent work by Dr. Edward Hamilton. In these days of dark explorings among cannibals and crocodiles, it is refreshing to be told of quiet rambles by a trout-stream, amid no more savage creatures than a dabchick or a dragon-fly. Dark and dismal forest scenes, animate with songless birds and stinging insects, may have a charm for some morose and melancholy readers; but most people will prefer to take a mental ramble through a stretch of blooming meadowland, over which the sun is shining, and the larks are singing. After the long winter of gloomy fog and frost, of grimy slush and snow, which we poor Londoners have lived through, it is delightful to be taken to the country by a guide like Dr. Hamilton, and, if only in our mind's eye, to behold the bright green brookside, where the sweet spring breeze is blowing, and the speckled trout lie basking. How pleasantly ye live, that fishers be! That must surely be the thought of any one who reads "The Riverside Naturalist," and thinks of the delightful intercourse with Nature which the author must have had while jotting down his notes. The book, he tells us, owes its origin to his calling a friend's notice to an autumn flock of goldfinches, which settled on some thistles near the stream where he was fishing, and to his finding that his friend did not even know their name. Rightly guessing that such ignorance was not at all exceptional, and knowing how great pleasure may be gained by even a slight knowledge of the history of Nature, he allowed his notes to bud into the leaves of this new volume; and all fishing men should thank him for a very pleasant adjunct to their literature of sport.

It may be feared that many anglers, as well as other sportsmen, have their organ of destructiveness developed very largely, while that of veneration for the works of their Creator is of very small extent. Doubtless there is still some truth in the old taunt, "It is a fine day; let us go and kill something!" which English country gentlemen have had levelled at their heads. But the sneer may be escaped, if they

* Published by Sampson Low & Co.

consult Dr. Hamilton, and have sufficient wisdom to follow his advice.

The keenest fisherman will find a harmless love of Nature in no way detrimental to his innate and hereditary taste for deadly sport. Indeed, without diminishing the weight of the basket, it will frequently increase the pleasures of the day. The taste for watching living creatures, with the view of comprehending somewhat of their habits, may solace many a weary waiting till the trout begin to rise; and the finding of a butterfly of more than common beauty, or a daffodil or a water-lily blooming out of season, may compensate in some measure for an otherwise blank day.

Dr. Hamilton advises, when we take our walks abroad, or our rambles by the river, that we carry a binocular to assist us in our sightseeing. To watch the flight of birds this is really indispensable, as well as to acquire some certain knowledge of their habits, and it may help us to discover the reality of scenes to which distance seems to lend the glamour of enchantment.

Dr. Hamilton prescribes likewise the carrying of a pocket magnifier, which is useful in examining wild flowers and insects. For botany and entomology are studies equally enticing, and alike may be pursued in a ramble by the river, or when the fish are sulky.

"Under this palm," said Linneus, laying his hand upon the mossy bank where he was sitting, "under this, my friend, there is the study of a lifetime"; and any one who wishes to learn something about mosses and their structure, will find his naked eye quite insufficient for the study. So, too, with insect life, which is so variously wonderful, and so teemingly abundant.

"Sit on that old boulder," says Dr. Hamilton, "relic, maybe, of the glacier age, now covered with moss and lichen, and turn over the dead leaves at your feet; beetles and other insects of various forms and hues will scuttle away to seek some fresh hiding-place." And if you would examine them, you may cry out with the poet, "Why has not man a microscopic eye?" and feel small comfort in the answer, "For this plain reason, man is not a fly."

A note-book, "to record results," is also very strongly recommended to the Rambler. It may serve, too, for recalling incidents and accidents, which "olim meminisse juvabit," as every Board School boy

knows, or may ere long be taught to construe. Even such misfortunes as the loss of a fine fish, or a souse into deep water while wading in the shallows, may, in aftertime, afford some pleasant conversation; and details soon grow dim in the most retentive memory. The hastiest of jottings, if pencilled on the spot, are likely to be accurate, and therefore worth preserving; and their perusal now and then may prevent that reputation for drawing the long bow, which is enjoyed by many anglers as well as other sportsmen.

Even with no more than a walking-stick for company, a ramble by the riverside is pleasurable exercise; and the handling of a walking-stick needs no such careful training as the fops of the last century bestowed on "the nice conduct of a clouded cane." So the Rambler has more time for observation than the angler, who must watch his fly or float, and must keep his thoughts and senses chiefly fixed upon his fishing. And so Viator may be no less grateful than Piscator for the very pleasant reading which the Doctor's pen provides for him.

There are nearly four hundred pages in the book. Of these a score are given to the quadrupeds and bats; more than seven times as many to the birds; a dozen to the reptiles; above a hundred to the fishes; nearly sixty to the insects; three dozen to the flowers; and the nine remaining to the molluscs, worms, and crayfish. This may briefly give some notion of the work; which, it may be added, is tastefully adorned with many clever drawings.

Including bats, and rats, and mice, "and such small deer," there are some half a score of different animals which frequent the riverside; besides "the cat i' the adage," which not seldom may be seen there. Of these the creature called the water-rat is probably the best known, being certainly the commonest. This, however, is a sort of "Mrs. Harris" among animals, there being "no such never a person" really known to modern naturalists. It is sad to cast a slur upon the statements of a poet, but the "She" whose soft brown eye so touched the heart of her admirer, that he vainly sighed to woo her, "for she was a Water Rat!"—this winsome "She" was really nothing of the sort, and might well have felt insulted by so odious an error. Her proper name was vole, or water-vole in full; since double-barrelled names are very much in vogue now. The voles were formerly described as being

rather distantly related to the beavers. But the research of Mr. Waterhouse has given them a place between the musk rats and the lemmings—both families of ancient American descent, and of unblemished reputation. In summer-time and autumn the water-voles are frequently mistaken for the brown rats; which common, low-bred creatures have the habit then of leaving home, like more distinguished beings, and of spending a few weeks by the hedgerows and the river. While there they not infrequently enjoy a little sport, making sad havoc among the fish.

Although their noses are less pointed, their ears of smaller size, and their tails more hairy, the water-voles bear certainly some likeness to the brown rats, and are often put to death for their unfortunate resemblance. In diet they are pure vegetarians, and never touch a trout, nor meddle with its spawn; these being the heinous crimes whereof they falsely are accused, and for which they wrongly suffer. Riverside ramblers may with justice plead for mercy to the water-voles; and for their pretty little cousins the red field-vole and the short-tailed field-mouse. The water-shrew, however, is not quite so innocent, though shrews are mostly insect-feeders. But then excuses must be made for beauty; and the water-shrew, we learn, "is a very pretty little animal—and when under water its coat is covered with bubbles of air, looking like silver globules, the hair being perfectly impermeable to water." So, though Master Shrew may sometimes breakfast upon trout eggs, his prettiness may surely be pleaded in excuse for him. It may be urged, too, that, like that of the policeman of Penzance, his "lot is not a happy one," so far at least as safety is concerned, while he is breakfasting; for, unhappily, the water-shrew "is a favourite food of the weasel, who will often follow it into the water; but as the weasel is not an adept at diving, Master Shrew beats him in this element, and thus saves his life."

If one could only manage "The Taming of the Shrew," and of his enemy the weasel, it would be as good as a play to watch their gambols in the water. But such rare sights are reserved for very few spectators; and happy is the man who has the fortune to behold them. It may be feared, too, that their rarity grows every year more patent, owing mainly to the mania for over-preservation. To this end keepers are endowed

with powers of wholesale massacre, and think they show their zeal by their activity in slaughter. The proverb coupling death with the gift of a bad name becomes elastic in their minds, and is quickly stretched from dogs to less destructive animals. Creatures the most innocent are denounced as noxious vermin, and are poisoned, trapped, or shot with no just cause or mercy. Dr. Hamilton most sensibly protests against such bloodshed, and pleads earnestly against this holocaust of victims on the altar of Diana. He even ventures on defending such a culprit as the otter, and brings evidence to witness that the animal does really far more good than harm, if the account be fairly balanced. After placing to his debit a salmon now and then, and some few brace of trout and grayling, the otter should be credited with his certain predilection for eels and little pike, both specially destructive poachers in a trout-stream. So, likewise, his restless and predacious little relative, the weasel, is in reality most helpful to "keep the game alive," although he is so much maligned and often murdered by the keepers. For the weasel is a deadly enemy to rats, which will not merely eat young rabbits, but have a liking for poached eggs, both of partridges and pheasants.

Whether on the moor, or in the covert or the river, over-preservation is fatal to good breeding. The grouse disease has followed over-stocking on the moors, and a plethora of fish may be the ruin of a trout-stream. Both birds and fish deteriorate in quality and size if they multiply too rapidly, and if the weakly ones be not cleared off by such destructive creatures as Nature has provided.

Of these appointed agents none is more lovely than the kingfisher; a thing, indeed, of beauty as it flashes by the bank, but which seems by no means likely to be a joy for ever. Not merely is he murdered that ladies, gentle ladies, may wear him on their heads; defying all the efforts of the Plumage League to save him. But the trout-breeders are also ruthless butchers of the bird, and, says Dr. Hamilton, they will only be content with its "complete extermination." One method of its capture is so odiously cruel, that publicity alone should surely put a stop to it:

"A number of small spring-traps are set on narrow boards crossing the stream, on the hatches, and on old boughs hanging over the river, on which kingfishers often

perch; and when settling on these the trap is sprung, and catches the poor birds across the legs, breaking and tearing them. There they remain, maybe for many hours, until the river-keeper visits his traps. It often happens that the trap cuts the legs clean off, and the poor maimed bird flies away to die, a lingering and terrible death by starvation."

Many an essay has been written on the cruelty of sport; and much fine writing might be wasted on the selfishness of sportsmen. Without dilating on this theme, it may, I think, be fairly questioned if the fly-fishers be justified in killing off the kingfishers. Ramblers, as well as anglers, may reasonably claim to have an interest in the matter, for to them this "rara avis" is an ever-welcome sight; and it may soon be as invisible as the great auk, or the dodo. Whether the man who rents the right of fishing a few furlongs of a trout-stream should thereby have the further right conferred on him, and on all the keepers under him, of killing all the kingfishers his breeding ponds attract thither—this is a fit subject for debate by any social parliament, and the quality of mercy might be strained to have a voice in it. Whatever may be urged in favour of the fisherman, it can hardly be denied that he enjoys a selfish privilege; and that whole miles of river-rambling may be thereby robbed of much of their attractiveness.

Despite the clamour of the keepers, and his own great love of trouting, Dr. Hamilton pleads warmly for more mercy to the kingfisher, affirming stoutly, and adducing Yarrell's well-known work in evidence, that the bird "does an immense amount of good by destroying vast numbers of the greatest enemies to the young trout," such as sticklebacks and minnows, dragon-flies and water-beetles, whereof the larvæ are especially destructive of the trout fry. The kind pleader, too, judiciously arouses further interest in the fate of the poor bird, by some classical allusions to its romantic history. He tells us the old love-tale of Ceyx and Alcyone; how they both were changed to kingfishers, and were gifted with the power to keep the ocean calm while they built upon its bosom—a myth prolific of much poetry, as is proved by apt citations from Shakespeare, Keats, and Drayton, whose couplet neatly sums the story:

There came the halcyon, whom the sea obeys,
When she her nest upon the water lays.

Like the modest orator who followed Mr. Burke, "I say ditto" to the Doctor, in hoping that "more merciful and more sensible councils will prevail"; and that we may all again be delighted to watch the bright hues and the rapid flight of this "gem of the waters." All true lovers of Nature must join him in this hope; and they certainly will give a hearty welcome to his statement, that owls, and many other very interesting birds, are the victims of a popular delusion as to guilt, condemning them too often to the gibbet of the gamekeeper. The merciful old maxim of "live and let live" is considered rather obsolete in these days of monster battues and hurry-scurry game-slaughter. Amid the bustle of a "big shoot," owls, and other birds are often banged at by mistake; or help to swell the bag beneath the heading "Various." Now, though carrion crows and sparrow-hawks, and even jays and magpies, have an appetite for game, and may expect to pay the penalty for such insatiation, both the barn-owl and the brown owl have a taste for other diet, such as young rats, mice, and frogs, and very rarely touch the food which is forbidden. Frank Buckland once found twenty dead rats, all fresh killed, in the nest of a barn-owl; and Seeböhm mentions that in owls' nests where the remains of no fewer than two thousand five hundred and thirteen mice and nineteen bats were found, there were but two-and-twenty birds, nineteen of which were sparrows. The barn-owl is, in fact, one of the best friends of the farmer, and never harms the sportsman, though the keepers often gibbet it. Nor is his cousin, the brown owl—who is oftener heard than seen, and cries "tu whit, tu whoo, a merry note"—more injurious. For owls are, in their habits, very fashionable folk, and quite nocturnal in their feeding. They very rarely dine until long after dusk, and seldom sup till after midnight; so that when owls are feeding, all good little grouse should be hidden fast asleep, and safe beneath their mother's wing; and this should likewise be the case with baby partridges and pheasants. Besides, the owl may well be spared, not merely for its innocence, but for its antiquity and classic reputation. For was it not the bird of wisdom, and the favourite of Minerva; and ought not every Girton girl on that account to plead for it?

She might also beg for mercy to the swallow and the nightingale; for many a

young gunner tries his skill at swifts and swallows, and many a cruel bird-catcher will trap a nightingale when nesting, and when its little ones left helpless will slowly die of hunger. And was not Procne, the fair daughter of Pandion, King of Athens, transformed into a swallow? And was not her sister, Philomela, whose tongue was cut out by Tereus, King of Thrace, and Procne's brutal husband, turned into a nightingale, when her sweet voice was restored to her, to tell the world her woes? It may be feared, however, that the tale of how King Tereus, after eating his son, Itylus, was transformed into a lapwing,* will hardly prevent plovers' eggs from being served for supper, any more than the classic reputation of the goose for having saved the Capitol will spare that famous bird from being martyred at Michaelmas.

Mention of the lapwing may remind observant ramblers of its feigning to be wounded to draw notice from its chicks. The wild duck is at times a similar comedian, and Dr. Hamilton describes a scene in which he lately played a part, having a wild duck as the "leading lady" of the play. Happening to wade into a mass of flags, he suddenly disturbed her, and she dived into the stream. Cheep, cheep, cheep, clamoured piteously some half-dozen little brownish mites among the reeds; and the anxious mother then began to flap and flop along the water, and to fly a yard or two, and then to tumble on the grass as though she had a broken leg. Then she flew some little distance down the stream, and began to beat the water with her wings, of course frightening the fish, so that, lest his sport be spoiled, the fisher was compelled to walk a long way from the river, when, her play having succeeded, she flew back to her brood.

The kestrel is another of the innocents which are far too often massacred by keepers. Yet he may be easily distinguished from the sparrow-hawk, not merely by his longer wings and lighter colour, but by his frequent habit of hovering over a meadow, with his head pointed to the wind, a habit which has gained him his provincial nickname of the wind-hover. He never touches game, feeding chiefly upon field-mice, frogs, and even beetles. As a marked proof of his harmlessness,

small birds show no symptoms of alarm when he flies near them; whereas the mere sight of a sparrow-hawk always sets them in a twitter. The nightjar, too, which sometimes is mistaken for a hawk, and mercilessly murdered, is not only quite harmless, but, to those who dislike insects, most helpful in his diet. He lives chiefly on dor-beetles, but will eat cockchafers, or gnats, or any little night-fliers. His lovely plumage, also, should save him from destruction; but while the savage fashion lasts of wearing feathers for a head-dress, such beauty is too likely to prove fatal to its owner.

Other persecuted birds which frequent the riverside are the heron and the water-ouzel. Of these the former, it is true, may take a troutling now and then; but its favourite food is eels, which eat up shoals of troutlings. The latter, though suspected, is scarce proved to be a sinner. After adducing weighty evidence, Dr. Hamilton sums up the case with care, and, pleading that the culprit lives chiefly upon caddis-worms and other spawn-destroyers, inclines to an acquittal on the ground of compensation. It seems a pity the poor ouzel cannot speak in self-defence, for its voice is most melodious, and well might move a man to mercy. And whoever has the luck to see it feeding with its family—the funniest little mites, who go diving with their mother—whoever sees these pretty chickens with their mother can never have the heart to help in their destruction. If, being a trout-breeder, he needs must find a victim whereon to wreak his wrath because of a blank day or two, he may far more fairly find one in the dabchick; for though a tiny little fellow, the dabchick is most terribly destructive when at dinner; and its appetite for trout eggs, for a bird of such small size, is beyond all doubt enormous. Indeed, it is asserted that a pair of breeding dabchicks will do more harm to a river than a brace of otters.

Of old the flight of birds was anxiously regarded by the augurs, and may even have decided the destiny of nations. Small notice was, however, taken of birds' singing, if we may judge by its infrequent mention by the poets. Writers nowadays are wiser, in this respect at any rate: although readers may be slow to profit by their wisdom. Nature gives the most delightful concerts every spring, and brings a host of charming songsters from abroad to sing to us. But some aural education is as needful to appreciate the

* So says Dr. Hamilton, citing Ovid for authority. Dr. Lempriere says, a hoopoe (vide "Philomela:" Edition 1839). Who shall decide when doctors disagree?

wordless songs they sing, as it is to relish properly the melody of Mozart or the harmony of Mendelssohn. How many ramblers know the sweet voice of the blackcap, when they have the luck to hear it; or can recognise the quaint chirp of the woodpecker, or the queer cry of the wryneck? How many know the churr-churr of the sedge-warbler, as he hops about the reeds, or the shrill note of the kingfisher, as he darts along the stream? How many even recognise the chirrup of the chaffinch, or the chatter of the starling? How many are there who take the trouble to distinguish the rich, mellow fluting of the blackbird, from the voice of "the wise thrush," who, says Browning, "sings each song twice over," and often thrice or four times—

Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture.

Whoever takes the pains to listen to the birds will find his pleasure much increased by the knowledge of their songs. In our capricious climate they mark the seasons far more surely than the almanack can do, and their voices never seem to be affected by sore throats. Although rude Boreas may bluster, and snow be still upon the ground, we may be sure that spring is near when the chiffchaff is heard, and when "the cuckoo tells his name to all the hills." And when the warblers cease their warbling, and the cuckoo says "ouc-cuc-koo," and the nightingale is mute or hoarsely croaking in the hedgerows, we may feel sure that spring is over, and that autumn—for we have but seldom any real summer now—is certainly at hand. Even the singing of the skylark, the most constant of our vocalists—except perhaps the robin, and possibly the thrush—is either shortened or prolonged according to the season, although not in accordance with the actual length of days. In springtime, as a rule, the song lasts about four minutes. I have often timed it carefully, and the longest song recorded in my memory came from the beak of a French vocalist. This was in early May, and near the mouth of the Gironde. Although a strong sea-breeze was blowing at the time, the bird kept well-nigh stationary, after soaring to a height, and its song was clearly audible for nearly seven minutes.

Proceeding to the reptiles—which zoologists agree in rather classing with the birds than with the fishes or the beasts—Dr. Hamilton considers that Saint Patrick did little good to Ireland when he drove

them from its shores. They are generally useful in destroying slugs and other noxious creatures, and though many are thought harmful, the viper is the only British reptile which is really venomous. The viper, otherwise called adder, rarely grows to more than twenty inches, or, at most, two feet; and further may be known by the dark spots on its sides, and the zigzag line that stretches all along its back. The harmless common snake is often slaughtered in its stead, as likewise is the slow-worm, which, like frogs, and toads, and hedgehogs, is a great friend to the gardener, being very fond of slugs. Shakespeare for once is faulty in his choice of a fit epithet; for the toad, which "wears a jewel in its head," is really no more "venomous" than the lizard or the snail. Nor need the fairies have been fearful of either newts or blindworms, for neither would in any way have harmed their sleeping Queen.

Of the fishes Dr. Hamilton has many things to say, and many tales to tell, combining happily much knowledge of science and of sport. To the family Salmonidæ, he gives nearly fifty pages; beginning with the noble *Salmo Salar*, and ending with the humble *Osmerus Eperlanus*, more commonly called smelt. He discourses on the mental capacity of fishes, which, we learn, are placed no longer in the lowest class of Vertebrates, being proved to be endowed with reason and intelligence. He discusses, too, such problems as "Whether fishes sleep?" and "Whether they feel actually pain on being hooked?" To both these questions he thinks the answer must be "Yes"; though on the latter point the matter of degree is left in doubt. That the pain is evanescent may be argued from the fact that fish so quickly take the hook again, after having been released. As to their sleeping, Dr. Hamilton has no doubt, having more than once been forced to poke them with his rod to make them stir when they were basking.

As to the insects to be met with along the riverside, from the midges to the mayflies, they give endless scope to study. In Great Britain there are upwards of three thousand kinds of beetles, many of them being aquatic in their habits. Several of these, however, are but seldom to be seen; whereas the student need not fear a dearth of gnats and midges. But the mayfly is a far more interesting creature, and much science has been spent upon its

stages of developement. It is distinguished by as many a fine alias as a fashionable swindler; being known first as a "Nymph," next as a "Sub-Imago," and later as an "Imago"; assuming finally the title of "Ephemera Danica," vulgarly called "May-fly." It may shock poetic people to learn that these same "Nymphs" are supposed to live on mud; which seems a nasty sort of food for so nicely named a creature. Loyal subjects may, however, note with satisfaction that in the Jubilee Year the mayflies were numerous beyond precedent; thus adding another to the very many wonders of that *Annus Mirabilis*.

Of the river plants and wild flowers I have little space to speak. Suffice it that the "Naturalist" accords them ample notice; and corrects the common error which miscalls the reed-mace, or great cat's tail—*Typha Latifolia*—by the name of bull-rush; a title that belongs to the *Scirpus Lacustris*, which is known otherwise as club-rush. The statement, too, is made, which may be novel to most people, that the common water-cress is a species of nasturtium, a name derived from *Nasus Tortus*; meaning a nose twisted, or convulsed, by the pungency of the plant. Curious scraps of country lore, and choice fragments of old poetry, are sprinkled among the flora as profusely as they are among the fauna of the "Naturalist"; but we happily are spared the hackneyed "primrose by the river's brim," which so greatly moved the wonder and the wrath of Lord Dundreary.

I have said enough to show that he who runs or rambles by the river may read "The Riverside Naturalist" with profit and with pleasure, and will find in it a welcome addition to his books. The work is not a mere dry record, stuffed with dreary facts and figures, as is the case with many histories, natural or not. The fisherman may draw from it much well-gathered information, and may likewise learn to mix a little mercy with his sport; and the rambler may be taught to keep his eyes and ears more active, and with his better knowledge may enjoy a keener interest in all he hears and sees. He may learn to listen to the murmur of the brook, or the music of the birds, as melodies inspiring the myths of ancient lore; and the presence of a nightingale, a swallow, or a kingfisher may remind him that the riverside is really classic ground. In his mind's eye he may see it, as the poets did of old, peopled with shaggy satyrs and

with shining nymphs. Nor will his enjoyment of the vision be diminished if a shadow of regretfulness should fall upon the scene; as may be hinted to his fancy by the lovely lines in "Rolla," which well may be remembered by the riverside:

Regrettez vous le temps où les Nymphes lascives
Ondoyaient au soleil parmi les fleurs des eaux;
Et d'un éclat de rire agaçaient sur les rives
Les Fauns indolents couchés dans les roseaux?
Où les sources tremblaient des baisers de Narcisse;

Où les Sylvains moqueurs, dans l'écorce des chênes,
Avec les rameaux verts se balançaient au vent,
Et siffaient dans l'écho le chanson du passant;
Où tout était divin, jusqu'aux douleurs humaines;
Où le monde adorait ce qu'il tue aujourd'hui;
Où quatre mille dieux n'avaient pas un athée!

Nowadays, atheists may be more numerous; but the love of Nature certainly will not increase their number, nor will agnostics be augmented by the knowledge of her works. In his book upon "The Wisdom of God in the Creation," Professor Ray describes the ways and wonders of many living creatures, and he affirms that "Man is commanded to consider them . . . and to give God the praise."

BOUFFÉ.

A REMINISCENCE.

A LITTLE more than two years ago, October the twenty-seventh, 1868, one of the most admirable comedians the French stage has ever possessed, died peacefully in his modest home at Auteuil. Born in Paris September the fourth, 1800, *Marie Bouffé* had consequently attained his eighty-eighth year, thereby falsifying the prediction of a journalist who, writing in 1847, had expressed his opinion that "so frail and sickly-looking a figure was apparently not long for this world." The son of a carver and glider, and one of twenty-two children, he was originally intended for his father's profession, and practised assiduously for some time; his natural predilection for the stage, however, induced him at an early age to profit by an opportunity of testing his capabilities at Doyen's private theatre, the result of the experiment being sufficiently encouraging to decide his future career.

His first regular engagement was at the *Panorama Dramatique*, in 1821, as an actor of "general utility," at a salary of twelve pounds a year; this was raised in 1822 to forty-eight pounds, and in the fol-

lowing year, by which time the manager had learnt to appreciate the abilities of the young recruit, to a hundred and twenty pounds. In 1824 we find him at the Cirque, where his sister, who afterwards married the actor Gautier, was then performing; and subsequently at the Galté, where, by slow and sure degrees, he gradually became a recognised favourite. So marked, indeed, was the advance made by him in popular estimation, that, on the opening of the Nouveautés Theatre, in 1827, he was specially engaged there for the title-part in a piece called "Caleb," and remained a member of the company until 1831, when Monsieur Poirson, the manager of the Gymnase, who for some months had had his eye on the rising comedian, persuaded him by dint of liberal promises—most of which turned out to be illusory—to sign a contract with him for a term of years, a stroke of policy more advantageous to the lessee than to Bouffé, as the latter afterwards discovered to his cost.

From an artistic point of view, however, the actor was undoubtedly a gainer by the change; the Gymnase at that period held a high position among the minor Parisian theatres, the company including such popular favourites as Ferville, Numa, Klein, Madame Volnys, and Mademoiselle Julienne, and the répertoire being constantly enriched by important novelties from the practised pens of Scribe, Bayard, Mélesville, and other eminent dramatists of the day. Before many weeks had elapsed, Bouffé found himself quite at home in his new quarters, and, after the usual probationary essays in the stock-pieces of the theatre, an ordeal through which he passed triumphantly, only desired to give the public a taste of his quality in an original part. He had not long to wait; for, little as he expected it, one of the greatest successes in his dramatic career was already in store for him. Emile Vanderburek, joint-author with Bayard of the "Gamin de Paris," which had just been accepted by Poirson, considerably astonished that gentleman by suggesting that the part of Joseph—the "gamin"—should be entrusted to Bouffé.

"Impossible, my dear sir," objected the manager, who had intended giving it to some one else; "he is only a beginner here, and has no position."

"The 'Gamin' will make him one, or I am much mistaken," retorted the dramatist. "Anyhow, my colleague and myself have

decided that he shall play it, or we withdraw the piece."

Poirson felt that he was checkmated, for, although he would have refused Vanderburek point-blank, he dared not offend Bayard, who was one of his very best "house-authors," and Scribe's son-in-law into the bargain. He therefore yielded, but with no very good grace, and Bouffé had the part; the result being a complete triumph for the actor, and a succession of crowded houses for several months.

The long run of the "Gamin" and the increasing popularity of its principal interpreter, put other playwrights on their mettle, and novelties good, bad, and indifferent, came pouring in on all sides, the leading personage being invariably destined for the young comedian. Thus, in the space of a few years, his name became inseparably associated with a variety of characters exclusively his own, and which up to the present day no other French actor has ever ventured to attempt. Trim in "les Enfants de Troupe," Grandet in "la Fille de l'Avare," "l'Oncle Baptiste," "l'Abbé Galant," "Pauvre Jacques"—excellently played in London by Morris Barnett, and in Florence by Luigi Vestri—"le Père Turlututu," and that most sympathetic of all his personations, "Michel Perrin," successively delighted Parisian playgoers, and raised the Gymnase to a pinnacle of prosperity which it had never, even in its palmiest days, previously attained.

A change, however, for the worse was impending; in 1843 a foolish quarrel, the origin of which it is unnecessary to dwell upon here, between Poirson and the Dramatic Authors' Society, occasioned the withdrawal from the theatre of all the pieces written by members of the association; in other words, of the manager's entire répertoire. Left to his own resources, Poirson, with a courage worthy of a better fate, endeavoured to supply the deficit by the production of novelties by young and untried writers, trusting that with the all-powerful aid of Bouffé he might succeed in weathering the storm. Unfortunately, these optimistic anticipations were not destined to be realised; the public obstinately declined to patronise the essays of M. Jules de Prémaray and his equally inexperienced colleagues, and in less than a month the receipts of the theatre had dwindled down almost to nothing. This unlucky crisis was

a disastrous blow to Bouffé, who, deprived of all his effective parts, and unable to make anything out of the new ones allotted to him, was naturally desirous of escaping from a position which was daily becoming more and more unendurable. This was by no means easy to accomplish; by a clause in his contract with Poirson—hitherto regarded by him as a mere matter of form—he could only cancel his engagement by paying a forfeit of a hundred thousand francs, which the manager, with the tenacity of Shylock, insisted on having to the last farthing. At this juncture Monsieur Nestor Roqueplan, who had just assumed the reins of government at the Variétés, anxious to enrol the popular actor among the members of his company, came unexpectedly to the rescue; and partly from his own resources, partly by way of a loan to be repaid by instalments out of his new "pensionnaire's" salary, handed over the required sum to the manager of the Gymnase, who shortly after wisely retired into private life.

Bouffé's début at the Variétés was the dramatic event of the year, the announcement of a revival of the "Gamin" sufficing to attract for several weeks the traditional "all Paris"; Lafont, moreover, who for the first time reluctantly undertook Ferrière's part of the General, contributed an additional interest to the piece, and was unanimously regarded as fully equal if not superior to his predecessor. This was followed by "l'Oncle Baptiste," and other characters of the actor's old répertoire; after which Roqueplan judged it expedient to produce one of the many novelties written expressly for Bouffé, and signed by the most accredited dramatists of the day. Strange to say, not one of these succeeded in hitting the taste of the town; "le Chevalier de Grignon," and "le fousse," both subsequently transplanted to London, were coldly received; and even Dumas's "Garde Forestier" failed to overcome the indifference of the public. In short, although no falling off in the talent of the comedian was perceptible, he could do nothing with the fresh material applied to him; and during the whole of his engagement at the Variétés, and, indeed, until the close of his artistic career, he cannot be said to have created a single new part in any way worthy of him.

His health, too, began to fail, and when his contract with Roqueplan came to an end, his permanent connection with any

theatre entirely ceased; he played occasionally for a night or two at the Porte Saint Martin, the Vaudeville, and—in 1861—the Gymnase; but these reappearances gradually became fewer and fewer, and finally were abandoned altogether. In the latter years of the Empire he solicited and obtained permission from Louis Napoleon, who had known him personally in former days, to take his farewell benefit at the Opéra. The receipts of this representation, which was rendered still more attractive by the co-operation of a host of artistic celebrities, exceeded a thousand pounds. His last appearance on the stage took place at the Opéra Comique, January the tenth, 1878, ten years before his death, at a morning performance organised for his benefit, on which occasion he played one scene from the "Fille de l'Avare," supported by Got, Delaunay, and Madame Favart; among the many other notabilities who volunteered their services were Salvini, Coquelin, Mesdames Marie Laurent and Sarah Bernhardt.

Those who remember Bouffé in his best days will readily acknowledge that it would have been difficult to imagine anything more nearly approaching perfection in the art of acting. Whatever character he undertook, he identified himself so completely with it that the spectator fancied he was listening not to a dramatic fiction, but to a scene of real life; there was no staginess or straining after effect—all was simple, natural, and true. His quiet humour was as communicative as his pathos was inexpressibly touching; and, although he has sometimes been accused of mannerisms, they never appeared obtrusive, or in any way out of character with the personage represented by him. I once heard him say that he had "created" a hundred and eighty-five parts, only twenty of which were good ones. What he made of those twenty is recorded in the dramatic annals of his time, and still more faithfully in the memories of those who have enjoyed the good fortune of seeing him play them.

Opinions differ as to the relative superiority of Bouffé and Farren in parts originally acted by the former, and especially in that of Michel Perrin. I am inclined to agree with George Henry Lewes, who, while acknowledging that the incontestable excellence of both "puzzled criticism to award the palm," concludes by saying: "Nevertheless, we all left the

theatre admiring Farren, and feeling an indefinable regard for Bouffé." According to an anecdote related by Dutton Cook in his "Hours With the Players," the "cock salmon" was fully conscious of his own merit. "Invited to witness certain of the impersonations of Bouffé, then—in 1842—fulfilling an engagement at the Saint James's, Farren replied out of the abundance of his self-admiration and confidence: 'No, sir, let him come and see me! Let Bouffé come and see William Farren!'"

In private life Bouffé was the most genial of men, and I can recollect more than once hearing him relate some of his early reminiscences in the "foyer" of the Variété. One of these referred to Mélingue, the excellent d'Artagnan of the "Mousquetaires," and a clever sculptor to boot.

"I first became acquainted with him at Rouen, in 1837," said Bouffé. "He had just returned from Guadaloupe, and was playing small parts at the theatre, where his salary amounted to five-and-twenty francs a week. He lodged at a tailor's, and, not being overburdened with cash, gladly accepted a commission from his landlord to make him a plaster statue of Pierre Corneille, destined to adorn his balcony, which Mélingue agreed to do, and was consequently allowed to live rent-free.

"In due time the statue was completed, and towered majestically over the tailor's shop. It looked very imposing at first," added Bouffé; "but in less than a week, either from exposure to the weather, or some other unexplained cause, one arm dropped off, followed by the nose and half of the head, until, little by little, nothing remained of the great Corneille but a shapeless mass, which eventually served as a cock-shy for the 'gamins' of Rouen!"

On another occasion he told us with infinite gusto a personal experience of his own.

"I was starrng," he said, "in a small provincial town, and had been announced in the bills as 'premier comique du Gymnase.' One evening I played 'Pauvre Jacques,' and the curtain had hardly fallen, when a spectator in the pit got up from his seat, and exclaimed in a very audible and indignant voice: 'They call that fellow a "comic" actor, and he never made me laugh once! Au contraire, j'ai pleuré comme un veau!'"

ON POSING.

IT is enough to glance in the window of any photographer to see how very considerably the gift of dissimulation varies in one's fellow creatures. Consciously or unconsciously we all have it, more or less; and, as things are in this world, I suppose it is one of the most useful of the more doubtful abilities we possess.

A man or woman at home, and the same man or woman abroad in the world, seems to be two persons, not one person. In rare cases it is not so. But for the most part we have to adapt our characters to our surroundings; bring one side to the front when we are with one person, another side to the front half an hour later; and so on, until we ourselves are fain to marvel at our many-sidedness.

This gives us the secret of the apparent superiority of the man of the world over his stay-at-home brother. At the foundation he is no better endowed than his comrade. But as time goes on he has to develop an infinity of moods and powers of which the other man thinks himself quite barren. By-and-by he is indeed—according to popular belief—all seeming; all things to all men. The general public agree to question his sincerity in everything, though at the same time, by some curious anomaly, they are content to admit that he is their superior. Our other friend has the more genuine individuality. When you hold out your hand to him, you have a fair conception of the kind of man you are greeting. He may not be half or a quarter as agreeable as the man of the world. No matter; he has compensation in knowing that he can win hearts if not heads.

The sensibility of the man of the world, if it has not gradually lessened to the vanishing point, is a very trivial matter. It irks him to show sympathy; but he is so practised in the world's ways and the world's words that it often happens he has the air of being more thoroughly sympathetic with suffering than another man whose heart yearns tenderly towards the sufferer. His glib "Oh, my dear fellow, I'm heart-broken to hear this news," not infrequently tells better than the dumb squeeze of the hand which is all another man's emotion will allow him to offer as a tribute of comfort. What if, five minutes afterwards, he is cracking as merry a jest as ever came from him, and drink-

ing champagne with the completest forgetfulness of his friend's bereavement or misfortune? And what if the other man, who could not even get out the words "I'm very sorry for you," finds himself unable to eat his dinner, purely from excess of sympathy? He who poses the better seems to have carried the day.

To be sure one must be, as Macaulay suggests in his diary, of very tender mould to be kept aloof from one's dinner by the calamities of others. I am grieved to confess that, as a rule, the recollection of these events is rather a "sauce piquante" for the meal than aught of a hindrance. And this from no set intention, but of nature. Burke confirms the reasonableness of this mood in being "convinced we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others;" but he, as a man of the world, makes ample apology for it when he adds that "it is not an unmixed delight, but blended with no small uneasiness. The delight we have in such things hinders us from shunning scenes of misery; and the pain we feel prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer; and all this, antecedent to any reasoning, by an instinct that works in us to its own purposes without our concurrence." Thus, when in the heat of an excited hour upon the Stock Exchange, one of the leading operators suddenly falls dead—having broken a blood-vessel in the brain—you may see, perhaps, the other members suddenly suspend work and draw off into groups. The animated whispers in which they discuss the event shows that, however shocking it is, it has a relish for them; and this is made the more acceptable by the knowledge that they too may, at any moment, be in peril of a like end.

There is truth in George Macdonald's words in explanation of the cunningness of the man of the world: "Not acceptable to himself, he has the greater desire to be acceptable to others." One may say this, too, without exciting the wrath of the accomplished man of the world; for wrath is a species of deep emotion of which he is all but incapable. A compliment about the appearance he presents to the eyes of the world would please him better than anything you said in praise of what you conceived to be a good quality innate in him. For, being a poser by profession, he values recognition of his acquired abilities more highly than a recognition

of that for which he has to thank Dame Nature alone. There are many actors and actresses who would not care a rush to be told they were excellent, worthy creatures, but whom a superlative in praise of their talent pleases profoundly.

When you come to think of it, a mirror seems to be a remarkable invention. It is certainly a prompter to duplicity. I have listened with interest to a woman's soliloquy in front of her glass. She was not deterred by my presence from speaking her mind to the person she saw before her; and all the while, with light touches, she improved upon her actual bodily form—or fancied she did so. She was not very amiable to her friend in the glass; and called her hard names, and charged her with offences against good manners that the other seemed to be inclined to resent even while they were being made. I am not sure that she did not, ere she had done, shake her small fist at her reflection; thus unwittingly giving me an example and hint of the naturalist's assertion that uncivilised man abhors to see himself in a mirror, and that an ape will gnash the teeth at its own double, and do its utmost to break the insensible vehicle of the outrage upon its equanimity.

Again, how different a person one sees in one's glass at one time, and at another! Not all the arts of dissimulation which exist in maxims and the cosmetic shops can keep the man or woman uniformly unruffled and the same. Spite, too, of the best enforced systems of self-repression,

Our foreheads blab the secrets of our hearts.

It is bad enough if they do this to the world at large, unknown to us; but worse when they do it so brazenly in the bit of glass we had hitherto regarded to some extent as guide, philosopher, and friend.

Certainly, if mirrors were not, we should have but a faint conception of ourselves as others see us. On the other hand, though a measure of polish would be abstracted from our lives, probably there would be more comfort than we have now. There would be fewer of those terrible heart-burnings which, spite of wise maternal consoling, come to vex the young girl who has been able to contrast her face with the faces of her sisters and her friends, and has perceived that she can by no stretch of fancy be called fair to look upon. We should also, it seems, be disposed to be more natural. Not knowing—perhaps not caring—how we appeared to others, we

should act more straightforwardly, and speak or smile or fall into a passion without recking "how we looked" when we did either the one thing or the other. Thanks to mirrors, all men and women carry the consciousness of their personality within them, like a print in a book; and they are loth to do anything that may disturb the grace of this picture, though bidden ever so by the voice of duty or conscience, which reek not of the outer man.

There is an inward pose as well as an outward. The one is for the beguilement of the world; the other is to deceive ourselves. Is it not odd that we should be so rash as to think that we can make ourselves believe we are other than we are? 'Tis odd enough; and still more so that we should, as some of us do, succeed in this. Yet it is but an exemplification of what now and then takes place in the mind of an actor. He has played Hamlet, or King Lear, so often, that he has come to fancy he is the Prince of Denmark, or the mad old King. His

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks,

has but too genuine a ring in it.

The Eastern fakir who puts himself into a tiresome position, and stays so for an indefinite length of time, in the end finds it easier to resume or continue this position—even though it were at first against Nature—than to conduct himself like other men.

This shows us the seriousness of the posing to which circumstances and perhaps our own habits, have led us. It becomes a second self, the master of our original self. We can't throw off the armour that it cost us so little effort to get into and buckle fast upon us. The world has got used to us in the iron stuff. We perceive that explanations about our identity would have to take place if we were suddenly to appear without it—if we were to go abroad speaking the words our hearts impel us to speak, and doing deeds that befitted such words, and none others. That would never do. It would be a proclamation of outlawry there and then. So we find it convenient to go on in the paths of easy dissimulation to which we were introduced by our guides and counsellors when we came to a discreet age.

This is not the most perfect conceivable ideal of life. Some of us kick against its methods again and again; loosen the

armour; and indulge at intervals in periods of what we agree to regard as pure and unadulterate truthfulness. But it is a perilous adventure, and by no means leads to the peace of mind we greatly yearn for. For, in the first place, we find ourselves then painfully susceptible to divers worries from which aforesome the armour in a measure protected us; and, on the other hand, the stigma of eccentricity is at once set upon us; and though we may reckon ourselves ever so robust of mental constitution, this is likely to prove a considerable trial of our strength. Upon the whole, it is well to conform to the ways of the world.

It has been said that women are not provided by Nature with beards, or the capacity for beards, because they have a talent for dissimulation much in excess of that possessed by men. We need our beards to hide the movements of our lips, which would, else, betray us in our dealings with the world. But a woman has a better mastery over her emotions.

Perhaps at first this seems a trifle strained. On consideration, however, I do not think it will appear so. The talent of dissimulation is in woman a fair equivalent for the gift of strength. Brute force wins a way in the world after its kind; intrigue has to struggle along in the wake of this apparently superior power. Often indeed the latter trips the former, and usurps its position in the race. There's no need to tell how Dilliah sheared Samson of his locks, or how the small mouse was able to do more than the lordly lion could.

We see it, too, in the commonest phases of every-day life. In the poverty-stricken houses of the East End, where tragedy is always brewing, because misery there so greatly abounds, who bears calamity the better, the man or the woman? Why surely, as a rule, the woman. And yet she does not feel it less than her husband. Her capacity for dissimulation is here a distinct blessing. It enables her often to comfort the man when he is at that last stage in the drama of ruin—hesitant only between Waterloo Bridge or the razor which a malcontent tempter has put within reach of his hand. Her gift as a poser makes her a ministering angel to man, even though she may at the heart be suffering torture beyond the power of words to describe.

Lord Chesterfield was, doubtless, not a moral teacher of the first order; but as a

sort of decorator and painter of the human animal he merits a certain amount of praise. For the man who would rather lose his money than his countenance, he was, and perhaps is likely to be, an invaluable companion. His philosophy—if he may be complimented with such a term—is congenial to men and women who are content to take the word of their betters for it that they are hopelessly unregenerate. "You are not worth much, my friend," his lordship as good as says; "but you are worth quite as much as your neighbour; and by a proper attention to what I shall say to you, you may make it appear that you are worth twice, perhaps, indeed, ten times as much as you are worth. The world, my friend, cares not one jot about the underlying truth. It will take you at your own valuation. Therefore, help yourself to the agreeable graces and tricks of manner which a long experience has enabled me to recommend to your notice, and go forth with head erect, and boldly, yet not with ill-bred brazen audacity, stare the world in the face. I flatter myself that you will thank me for my advice by-and-by."

It is quite possible. For, really, the arts of dissimulation are not bad things in their way, and, if one does not surfeit upon them, manifestly they may be applied as much for good as for evil. The person who realises that his natural instincts are not quite what he would like to confess before the world, may, even solely for expediency's sake, disguise them and act as if he were a different kind of man. It will go against the grain, of course. But anon, his feigning has become habitual, and he himself is, therefore, transformed. For this he has to thank that excellent talent of dissimulation, which, at the outset, perhaps, he regarded as a vice rather than a possible handmaid of virtue.

One may go farther, and say that but for this faulty, civilisation itself would be but a barbaric state of society. Indeed, it would be practically impossible.

"What a strange scene," says Sir Walter Scott, "if the surge of conversation could suddenly ebb like the tide, and show us the state of people's real minds.

No eyes the rocks discover
Which lurk beneath the deep.

Life could not be endured were it seen in reality!"

Since there is dissimulation all around us, surely we ourselves may be allowed to

pose. It suits the world and suits us. Why seek other justification of a condition of things which is at least as profitable for us as it is unprofitable, and which we cannot hope to remedy?

THE CHIEF OFFICER'S WAGER.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW WE TAMPERED WITH THE SERPENT'S CHEST.

THREE days passed, and though deck-hands, cooks, stewards, stokers, coal-trimmers, and, with two exceptions, all the other members of the "Elsinore's" household were in a chronic state of searching, not a trace of Burgoyne could be discovered. The two exceptions were the Captain and the squint-eyed man—enemies and polar opposites in everything else, but at one in disapproving of the chief officer's wager. The former said it would give the ship a bad name, and Trivison ought to have known better than to mix himself up with such nonsense. The latter observed that betting was a wicked occupation, and groaned and projected his eyes to the bridge of his nose whenever the chief officer was within hailing distance. The squint-eyed man's scruples caused more amusement than alarm; even Staynes chuckled over them; but the Captain's hostility was a graver matter. To be discountenanced by a man who is as autocratic in his kingdom as the Great White Tsar is in his, bodes ill for the object of the displeasure. And if I add that when our most sapient Captain was riled with his officers, he exhibited towards them the manners of a bargee, combined with the tact of an inexperienced hangman, you will understand that Trivison's position had become vastly uncomfortable.

The Captain hoped—with purple-faced sarcasm—that Mister Trivison would remember that he was paid to assist in the navigation of the ship, and not to spend all his time in examining the stowage of the holds, or gossiping with the stokers whilst they were on duty.

The Captain—with a grin which any professional fiend might have envied—trusted that Mister Trivison would occasionally permit some of the deck hands to do their duty during his watch to-night. The fact that there was an inadequate watch kept

last night didn't matter, as things turned out, for the weather was clear; but now the sky was heavily clouded over, and it would be a pity to bring the "Elsinore" into collision just through her chief officer's whim.

The Captain—with a nut-cracker bow of exquisite politeness—would be very much obliged if on the next cruise Mister Travison would ship a company of detectives, at ordinary fares, to do his dirty work, as he—the Captain—did not like having his own crew tampered with.

And so the Captain's song went on for several pages, with many more still to turn over. And when Staynes tried good-naturedly to smooth matters, the Captain savagely retorted that when he wanted advice he would go to a sea-lawyer, and not to a lubberly land-shark. The which hint was sufficiently pointed to make the would-be mediator drop the controversy. For be it known unto all men that as a sea-lawyer is a very undesirable sort of body indeed, the comparison was a peculiarly unflattering one.

So that when I suggested experimenting with the serpent's cage on deck, and the chief officer agreed in the advisability thereof, he added that we must take care not to let our doings come to the eyes of the old man.

The cage in question was an iron-bound, hardwood chest, four feet by seven, by six, lashed securely down to ring-bolts on the deck, just abaft the foremast. It had caught my eye long before; they were hoisting it on board when I came to Travison on the Friday night. It was very solidly put together, and had evidently received a great deal of knocking about before it reached the "Elsinore." But though bruised, it was nowhere fractured. There were nail marks all round the middle, showing where a floor divided it half-way up; but no other evidences of the internal arrangements. Each compartment was ventilated by a small square of perforated zinc, but one could not see through into the interior. At one end there were a brace of doors, one above the other; but they were securely fastened with number combination locks, which no instrument more delicate than a hammer could pick. A printed direction on the outside told that the chest was consigned to the Secretary of the Royal Zoological Society, at their Garden in Regent's Park, London; and to the curious, who gave him

a really good cigar, the purser would tell more.

"I've seen some rummy things on bills of lading," he would say, "but this caps all. It's snakes there is in that box, just nasty, slimy snakes, and nothing more. There's two of them, and though I ain't seen 'em myself, the chap that brought the box on board has, and he gave me a full description. They are called—h'm, let me see"—here he would refer to a bulgy notebook—"ah, anaconda"—here he would light the cigar, take a steady puff or two, and roll out the next word as if he loved it—"Galburtsiensis. Anacondas Galburtsiensises! there's a name for you! They were discovered by a German chap who was fossilising, and bug-hunting, and that sort of thing, 'way down in the Mexico valley, and a rare think he had as how to get hold of them, so I'm told. But he was 'cute, this German. He'd learned that these snakes always prefer man-meat to any other when they can get it. So what does he do but hire a couple of Mexicans for a parakeet shoot, and march 'em off to the swamp where the anacondas resided. Out aimed the snakes, and the two Mexicans were soon crowded into their stomachs; and then the German clapt 'em into that cage, up on deck yonder, and put 'em on the cars for New York. Value, did somebody say? Wish I owned 'em, that's all. Why, they are insured for fifteen hundred—Eh? No, pounds."

Then some one would ask when the anacondas were fed, and the purser would gaze round him, with a smile, for a full minute.

"Eat is it! They won't want feeding for another month yet. D'ye think you'd want to eat if you'd crammed down a nasty, greasy, smelly Mexican at a meal? Pooh!" And then for fear lest he had wounded his questionist's feelings, he would rush towards the bar and enquire: "What's it called?"

Travison and I puzzled over this snake-story a good deal. We allowed for a large amount of exaggeration; but even omitting the unfortunate Mexicans, we could not quite swallow the anacondas.

The chief officer wanted to know if there were such things as anacondas in that part of the world. I could assure him that there were in Brazil, and in many other parts of South America, but could not vouch for Mexico being similarly blessed. The doctor, too, to whom we applied for enlightenment, could give us little aid.

As time wore on, and no Burgoyne showed up—although Trivison's "second-sight" still saw him near—the contents of that coffer interested us more and more. It was not large enough for a big man like Burgoyne to stand up in, or to move about in, supposing it stored with provisions; even granting that the strongly-conjectured mid-partition did not exist. But—it was, as we thought, the only possible hiding-place which remained unexplored.

We were five days out when Trivison proposed his plan. He and I were sitting smoking in his cabin after breakfast.

"Henderson," he said, bringing his hand with a thump on to my knee, "I'm going to find out if Burgoyne's in that chest this very night."

"How!"

"Why, like this. I'm going to make believe to heave it overboard. If he's inside, and holds his tongue, well, he's got more pluck than I credit any man on this earth for having." Then he explained with minute detail how it was to be done, telling me at the same time that I should have to play the part of the Captain. "I don't want to be rude," he said, "but you've just got the old man's voice; and he must be the one to give the orders. Burgoyne would smell a rat at once if he heard me speak."

I acquiesced; and after we had thrashed out a few other points, Marline was brought to the cabin and let into the conspiracy.

The wind was fresh and easterly in the morning. It strengthened as the day wore on; and by nightfall it was blowing half a gale, still from the same quarter, and had kicked up a heavy sea. The "Elsinore" was by no means a wet boat, as a general thing, but she was taking in tons of water over her bows just then, and the foredeck was swimming. Nothing could have been better for our purpose. Trivison was on the bridge, and the Captain was in his berth with the happy assurance that he had got a thorough seaman in command of the ship.

A man was moving about in a mysterious manner near the foremast. He was filling and refilling a bucket with water, and dashing its contents at intervals against the zinc-covered ports of the serpent's chest. The man was Marline.

Presently he tramped aft, and returning along the swaying decks, brought with him the Captain—the bogus captain; myself.

There was a consultation against one of the zinc windows, the sailor pointing out that three of the ring-bolts to which the lashings were secured had been drawn already; that there was nothing else to make the chest fast to; and that if it fetched way with this mass of sea running, two or three men would perhaps be killed before it crashed through the bulwarks and made its escape. The Captain made use of a considerable amount of forcible language, at the impudence of some people in burdening him with a deck-load; at the state of the weather; at the lubbers who had pretended to lash the chest fast; and then he bade Marline lay out along the fore-yard and rig a whip.

Marline obeyed the order; and returning shortly with one end of the whip, made that and a couple of guy-ropes fast to the chest. Two other men came to assist, and after the lashings had been cut adrift, a steam-winch was set going, and the chest swung out to the bulwarks. It poised on the narrow ledge, lurching madly to and fro, and I waited a moment or two to let Burgoyne gather the full force of the situation.

There was no sign of life, and so the order was given to cut away—an order which, needless to remark, was not executed.

No sound came from the chest; and looking rather foolish over the sell, we lowered it back to its place on deck.

When everything was ship-shape again, the real Captain joined us. He was just half a minute too late to see the last of the performance; but, guessing something of what had taken place, his language was more lurid than polite. We walked back aft together, and when under the bridge, he stopped and roared at his chief officer, who was parading above:

"After that infernal stowaway again, are ye, Mr. Trivison! Smite me, but I'll report you for neglect of duty when we put in to Liverpool. And if I catch you at this game again, I'll take you there in irons. I will, so help me handcuffs! And as for you, Mr. Henderson, if I hear of you meddling with my crew again, I'll—ugh! bless me—I'll put you in irons, too. And now, confound you, go below, or I shall be losing my temper next!"

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE LEOPARD CHANGED HIS SPOTS.

ABOUT eight o'clock the next morning Williams burst into my cabin with more than his usual hurry and bustle. I was lying broad awake, thinking of what to say should the Captain be too inquisitive over that last night's business. The steward's first words were peculiar ones. He blurted out:

"Mr. 'Enderson, sir, hi'm blowed." And then commenced scrubbing his knobby head with a lean, red hand.

I nodded a nod which hazarded no opinion as to the correctness of the statement, and waited for an explanation. It came at last.

"You know that 'ere squint-h'eyed man, sir? O' course. Who doesn't? Well, 'e ain't squint-eyed at all, sir. There!"

"I know that," said I, with a smile at the fellow's earnestness.

The steward stared.

"Knowed it, did ye, sir? Then p'raps you won't be surprised to 'ear that 'e h'ain't got a red beard neither."

It was my turn to be startled now.

"H'all the 'air on 'is face takes on an' h'off like a set o' false teeth. Now that's noos, sir, h'ain't it? Hi went into 'is cabin suddint-like jes' now, an' cotched 'im razor in 'and, scrapin' away at a stubbly black chin for all the world like a Christian. Jes' think o' that, now. An' when 'e sees me, 'e lets a yell out of him like a Injun, an' I gets an' comes straight 'ere, sir."

"What is he up to, do you suppose?"

"Boltn' from the beaks, sir, you can lay. Cashier probably, and got 'is swag with 'im. There's a wood-box stowed away in the upper berth in his cabin big enough to bury a man in. There'll be dollars in that, hi allow, Mr. 'Enderson."

"What shape is the box?"

"Like a coffin, savin' that the sides is straight, an' there's rope becketts on it, instead o' plated handles. But it ain't a sea-chest. It's too long an' narrow for that. Why, it 'ud 'old you with yer 'at on, sir."

"Williams," said I, dropping my legs over the side of the berth, and sitting up, "you are going to pocket that hundred sovereigns if I'm not very much mistaken."

"Lawd, Mr. 'Enderson, you don't think that 'ere squint-h'eyed man's got Mr. Burgoyne stowed away, do yer?" gasped

Williams, the knobs on his head fairly blushing with delight.

"Now clear out," said I, "and let me get up. I must go and see Mr. Trivison. Meanwhile, contrive unostentatiously to keep a note on the squint-eyed man's movements."

I dressed rapidly, and went to the chief officer's cabin. He had been asleep, but woke at my entrance. I told him all that Williams had said, and asked his opinion on it.

"Why," said he, "I think we have run Burgoyne to earth at last. This is how he managed. He slipped on board amongst Staynes's flock under the very noses of us. You saw him. He was the tall, dark man, with the stoop and the long ulster. He dived below, and went straight to that squint-eyed fellow's cabin. Once there, the course is simple. When Williams is likely to pay a visit, friend Burgoyne retires to the long box—I was fool enough to put the idea of a coffin in his head, if you remember? When the coast is clear, he can emerge, and make himself tolerably comfortable. Provisions are easily supplied; other necessaries are a mere matter of detail. Henderson, old man, I'm eternally obliged to you and Williams. Without this hint, I verily believe Burgoyne would have slipped through without detection."

"But we haven't got hold of him yet. Don't make too sure of success, for fear of a disappointment."

"No, but now that we are certain as to his whereabouts, we shall not be long in laying hands on him. I shall have no delicate scruples in dealing with that squint-eyed man. He is an accomplice—he's conniving at a fraud against the Company, if you like to put it that way—and so I shall have no hesitation in searching his cabin, whether he likes it or not. We are in no desperate hurry for a day, so we will just wait till he is decently out of the road before making the overhaul, for I don't want to have a disturbance if it can be avoided. I'll give him till to-morrow afternoon, and if he doesn't see fit to offer us an opportunity before then, he'd better keep his weather-eye well skinned for squalls."

But the squint-eyed man did not leave the coast clear for an overhaul of his effects. On the contrary, he stayed in the saloon, or his own cabin, during the whole of the prescribed time. And so recourse

was had to scientific strategy. Travison interviewed the doctor. The doctor grinned, and produced from his waistcoat pocket a case which contained a small glass-and-silver syringe. He screwed the head of the syringe off, and selected a small glass tube from the half-dozen which the cavity contained. This glass tube held ten small white tabloids, about the size of a large pin's head. The doctor shook one out, grinned again, and handed it to Travison.

Travison passed it on to Williams.

In the course of the next half-hour that faithful steward—or unfaithful, according to which point of view you look at him from—had slipped the little tabloid into the cup of tea with which the squint-eyed man was wont to mark eight bells in the afternoon. We saw the dose inserted with our own eyes; we saw the victim walk about, with head well forward, and sip the liquid in his accustomed manner; we saw him return to his cabin, finish the last drop, and emerge; we watched him go on deck and parade awhile; we watched his eyes get drowsier, and more drowsy; we chuckled as he went into the deck-house at the head of the after-companion, and stretched himself at length on a sofa; and when, after a yawn or two, he settled down to a steady snore, we fairly rubbed our hands with delight. Not venturing to pass him, we gained the lower deck by the other companion, and made straight for his cabin. The door was locked, but the invaluable Williams produced a duplicate key. We entered. The long box lay in the upper berth, with its lid off—empty. In the lower berth slept a tall, broad-shouldered, black-haired man.

"Burgoyne at last," whispered Travison, with a sigh of relief.

The sleeper lay with his face towards the inside of the bunk. The chief officer bent over to wake him, and started back with an angry oath.

"Up on deck again," he shouted, "and grab that chap on the sofa! He's the man we want!"

And away we scurried; but only to find the place deserted.

"After him again!" cried my friend. "He must be close at hand."

And in every nook and corner, in every available hiding-place did we search, desisting only when exhaustion claimed us for its own.

Then we foregathered once more in Travison's cabin.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed; "fancy being sold like this. Burgoyne has got another fellow who is almost exactly like him, and whilst one takes his turn at wearing the red beard and assuming the squint, the other lies safely locked in number twenty-two. What dolts we have been! Any one but a thorough-paced idiot would have seen through this 'double' squint-eyed man's game. Why, he laid himself out to be disliked, and shunned, and avoided in the most barefaced manner imaginable; and we, in giving him a wide berth, have been doing the very thing he wanted. I wonder which half of the 'double' took the opiate, or if it was never swallowed at all! Come to think of it, the cunning beggar did take a three-parts-full teacup into his own cabin, and return with it empty. I thought, then, the contents were safely down his gullet. I am inclined to think now that the balance was bestowed on the wash-basin. Oh, Henderson, it is hard to have a glimpse of the man, and then miss him again like this!"

"Come, now, don't despond. We have stopped one earth at any rate, and Burgoyne will be hard put to it to find another burrow anything like so good. We shall lay hands on him soon, you may be sure."

"Not we," said Travison, despondently. "A man who is sharp enough to think of such a trick as this will not be floored for a retreat good enough to hold him for the day and a half we have left."

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE WAGER WAS SETTLED.

THE breeze, which had been light throughout the day, died away as the sun sank in majestic splendour beneath the purple waters of the west. It was a calm, and, save for a long, low, oily swell, the troublous waters of the Atlantic were at rest. Not a vessel was in sight from the "Elsinore's" deck. We were on an ocean highway; but tracks are broad where no Macadam is known. The sky was not cloudy nor the air misty; but a velvet pall of darkness blotted out the lamps of the heavens, and the only luminants that shone on the watery desert around us were those which the "Elsinore" gave birth to. Astern, the wake was dimly phosphorescent; abeam, the yellow radiance from the ports glanced out warm and mellow; ahead, the sea was not in sight.

It was exactly the night a sailor likes. There was no possible chance of missing the lights of another ship. A soldier could not go wrong in such weather.

Travison and I had just come up from below: he to relieve, in a few minutes' time, the Captain on the bridge, and I to chat with him over the best means of laying hands on Burgoyne, who still remained intangible. In reply to some question as to speed, we had gone aft to examine the taffrail log, and were abreast of the sternmost skylight, when a couple of confused hails rang out from the bows. They were not the ordinary bawls of ship-board. They were shrieks rather: the despairing yells of scared strong men who were unnerved by deadly peril.

"Hard-a-port! Full-astern, for God's sake!"

Round rang the engine-room bell from "full speed ahead" to "full speed astern." The steam steering-gear rattled at frantic pace. But before the momentum of the huge steamer could be lessened, or her course appreciably altered, there was a sickening thud, and then a grinding, a rending, and a tearing, that told its own tale.

The first jolt threw me down with rude force. Travison clutched a stanchion, and kept his legs, and then set off running forward as hard as ever he could tear. I followed as soon as my breath came back, which was not for a minute or so; but seeing dense crowds surging up from the hatchways, I stayed under the bridge to await developments.

Presently the chief officer came back, and the skipper greeted him anxiously with:

"Well, Travison, what is it?"

"We've bumped into a water-logged derelict, sir, wood-laden, and flush with the water. She's cut in two, and the sea is strewn with planks. We have got half our bottom torn out. Collision bulk-head's gone by the water-line, and the Atlantic is tearing in like a mill-race." Then his voice dropped, and my straining ear just caught the words—"Not the smallest chance; ripped completely out. Half an hour perhaps, but I couldn't be sure of that."

The Captain whispered, "Go and get some revolvers," and when Travison sped off on his errand, the commanding officer lifted up his voice:

"To your quarters now, every man—Jack of you. Stewards, provision the boats. Boat crews, stand by your tackles, get the

plugs in, swing the davits, and then hold on till the word is given to lower away. Now be smart, and don't let there be any confusion, or lives will be lost. Those not on duty keep away from the boats. We've a small passenger list. There will be heaps of room for all hands."

At first it seemed as if some of the stokers, whom the depression of the bows terrified nearly out of their wits, were going to make a rush for the boats; but the Captain's orders, and the gleam of two or three pistols which Travison had distributed amongst the officers, held them in check, and all worked smoothly. The engineers were letting off steam as fast as it would escape; the third officer was sending up rockets; the fourth officer firing the brass signal-gun as quickly as he could load it. Blue lights illuminated the steamer at half-a-dozen points. A seaman was up on the fore-topgallant yard showing a flare.

The decks were alive with hurrying men; but there was order in the confusion, and method in the bustle. Stewards brought up from below bags of biscuit, hams, cans of beef, and stowed them away in the boats' lockers; each coxswain saw that his water-breakers were full; the boat's officer inspected all, and tested his compass.

As each boat was prepared, she was filled with a human freight, lowered into the water, and shoved off. The "Elainore's" bows were sinking fast, and every minute her stern rose higher, and higher in the air. But though there was some difficulty in manœuvring the quarter-boats, no accident happened; and in twenty-five minutes from the collision the shattered steamer was left without a soul on board of her. Four minutes later her screw swung round towards the zenith, part of her deck blew up, and she sank quietly down towards the oozy abysses of the sea floor.

By the Captain's orders the eight boats remained within half of one another. Not a breath of wind tarnished the smooth surface of the water, and, with Crookhaven bearing about fifty-five miles east and by north, there was no need to exhaust the men with unnecessary rowing. The Captain, with four of the cabin passengers, was in the starboard lifeboat. The chief officer had got me with him in the second cutter. The other boats were all clustered within a circle of a quarter of a mile radius.

The means of the "Elsinore's" destruction was an uncommon one; but it was simple, and we had soon viewed it in every aspect. Then, after a moment's lull in the conversation, I reminded Traviſon that his wager with Burgoyne would now be drawn.

"Yes," he said, "and I am not sorry for it. We might have caught him before we cleared Roches Point, outwards; but I have my doubts on the subject. By the way, which boat is he in?"

"Good Heavens! Haven't you seen him? I didn't."

"By Jove, Henderson, I hope the poor chap has not been hiding down amongst the cargo and got jammed to death by the shock of collision. I should never——"

"Boat ahoy!" sang out a voice.

"Hullo!"

"Is that Traviſon?"

"Yea."

"I'll bet you twenty to one in one thousand dollar notes that I get ashore safely out of this. The other bet's off now, worse luck; and I want to turn an honest cent or two somehow."

There was a muffled cackle of laughter from some of the men within earshot, and the Captain, whose temper was permanently soured by past events, cursed the successful stowaway vigorously.

But the chief officer refused to bet on the "heads I win, tails you lose" principle. Besides, he said he had had enough of gambling to last him for some time.

Morning broke, and with it came a breeze from the W.S.W.; but scarcely had we stepped our masts, and got the boats under canvas, than a homeward-bound steamer hove in sight and bore down upon us.

We breakfasted in her saloon.

Burgoyne, who still sported a heavy black moustache, sat beside a tall, dark, clean-shaven man, whom he introduced as "Mr. Crighton-Philipps, an actor, whom every one knows."

Mr. Crighton-Philipps showed us how he could squint at will, and told us of his amusing experience when creating the

character of the "Squint-Eyed Man"; and of how he had "to make up the gag as he went along, as the book was all wrong." And after favouring us with a description of the way we all fell into the rôles assigned to us, he concluded thus:

"That physicked cup of tea nearly did for me. I swallowed it all, but twigged what was the matter just in time. I couldn't keep my eyes open nohow, and so, after humbugging you into believing me asleep in the deck-house, I slipped below again, and was doing a genuine snore when you arrived at number twenty-two."

"I thought it best," said Burgoyne, "to give you something to think about—some decoy to occupy your best attention. And so, as Crighton-Philipps was coming across in the 'Elsinore,' we agreed that he should make everything connected with himself as mysterious as possible, and so create the idea of a 'double.'"

"Then weren't you in his cabin at all?" enquired Traviſon, with great surprise.

"No, I was labelled 'snakes,' and stayed on deck."

"Well, I am blessed."

"Confound it all! I thought you knew, or it should never have come out, and I could have worked the same racket again. Yes, I was there fast enough, and fairly snug, too, for the chest contained everything one was likely to want. Man alive, you and Henderson watched me hoisted on board, and never suspected anything. I saw you stare at my shell, and then go on gossiping again. That collision was real hard luck, as I should have got through for a certainty, although yesterday afternoon one of your sailors did nearly make me howl out by ramming a gimlet into the small of my back.

"I only feared for my money once; and that was when you threatened to heave me overboard. It was rather an anxious moment. But I thought you were bluffing, and guessed I'd see your raise. Oh yes, I was a bit scared, you bet; but—— Here, let's change the subject. Who's on for poker?"

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

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Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

STARTLED by such a wholly unexpected sound, Selma turned in the direction from which it came, and sprang to her feet, stretching out her hand to the slender trunk of a neighbouring tree as she did so to steady herself on the steep, uneven ground. Her hat had fallen off, the long, level rays of the afternoon sun lighted her hair, and touched her slight figure, as she stood; and as the man to whom the voice belonged proceeded to follow it quickly up the hill, and came suddenly in sight of her, he stopped abruptly, as though the sunlight—the sunlight in which she stood—had dazzled him for the moment. She waited, with her startled, troubled eyes fixed on him, as though he had sprung out of the earth, for him to speak, and after that instant's pause he lifted his hat and said:

"Pardon me, but I heard your voice, though I could not see you from down below, and I was afraid there might be something wrong. Can I be of any assistance?"

His voice was very pleasant, full, and manly, and he spoke with straightforward directness, which was perfectly simple, and perfectly courteous. Selma hesitated a moment, and he added, with a momentary glance at Elsie:

"Has the little girl hurt herself?"

In spite of the irrepressible admiration in his eyes—wondering, almost reverent

admiration, such as her own eyes had never met before—there was a natural frankness about his face and manner which inspired Selma with sudden confidence.

"Thank you," she said, "no, she is not hurt, but she is too tired, and the path is steep, and has frightened her. I"—and Selma's perplexed face broke into a smile at the words—"it's very absurd, but I can't get her any further."

The bronzed face of the man before her reddened under the sunburn at her smile, and he said, hastily:

"Is she very shy? Do you think she would let me carry her?"

"Oh," said Selma, with a pretty pink flush of confusion coming into her face, "oh, it's very kind of you; but—but perhaps she will try and walk now. Elsie darling, come!"

But Elsie made no attempt to respond to the appeal made to her, and Selma involuntarily turned from the child to her unexpected helper with an expression of despair.

"May I?" he said, with a smile. And then, as she rose with a deprecating, "Oh, thank you," he stooped suddenly and unexpectedly and picked the weeping Elsie up in his arms, bringing her suddenly face to face with a very good-natured pair of blue eyes.

Elsie did not resent the treatment; misery and desolation had already fallen on her little soul; it seemed to her that tribulation could go no further, and any change might possibly be for the better. Consequently she suspended her sobs for a moment, and scrutinised the blue eyes wistfully. Apparently their expression was reassuring, for the tears flowed more slowly.

"You're not afraid of me, little one!" The tone was so confident and kindly, that little Elsie did what many an older person would have done under the same circumstances—gave the answer that was evidently expected of her. She shook her head. "I'm going to take you part of the way home on my shoulder. You'll like that, won't you?"

"Elsie wants to go to mother. She wants her tea."

"That's all right, then; Elsie's going." He perched her comfortably on his shoulder, and turned to Selma for further directions; then, feeling a little shudder pass through the child as she looked down the steep incline, he took her into his arms again, so that she should not see it, as he said: "Were you going up or down?"

"Oh, thank you so much," said Selma, gratefully; "I am so very much obliged to you. Down would be far quicker for me if—if it is not too steep. We want to get into the Farstone Road. It is so kind of you."

She lifted her eyes shining with gratitude as she spoke, and he murmured, hastily, "Not at all," turning in the direction she had indicated.

The light was beginning to fade a little by this time in the wood, and the half-mile which lay between them and the road would have been by no means easy walking for a man with a child in his arms, Selma thought, even at the best of times. But the man behind her stepped confidently on, talking and laughing to Elsie all the time, never allowing her to feel either frightened or shaken until he stood with her on what she called the "nice, un-jogging road."

"Thank you very much indeed," said Selma, then. "Elsie, dear, say 'thank you very much,' and come."

But Elsie did not see the situation from the same point of view.

"Thank you very much," she said, obediently enough; but then she added, pathetically, and without attempting to move: "Elsie's welly tired."

Her friend in need turned hastily to Selma, and said, before she had time to recover herself:

"May I not carry her home?"

"Oh," began Selma, crimsoning, "I—I couldn't allow you to do such a thing. We are not going home; our party is picnicing on the shore, and they will be getting so anxious. Elsie, darling, it's a

lovely, smooth road now; you can walk beautifully."

But Elsie's little nerves had been a good deal shaken; the small mouth trembled ominously, and two big tears made their appearance, to tender-hearted Selma's infinite dismay.

"Oh, don't cry again, darling!" she exclaimed, appealingly. And then she raised her eyes to the blue ones which looked at her over the little fair head, as the man said again:

"Please let me carry her. It is really a very little way to the shore."

"It is out of your way, I'm afraid," she said, hesitatingly.

"It is not of the least consequence, I assure you," he said, eagerly—as the road in question led only to the open sea, he could not well assert that it was his way home, though he looked as though he would willingly have done so. "I'm afraid your friends will be getting anxious."

"It is most kind of you," she faltered. "Elsie——" But he had taken her hesitating words for consent, and the next instant they were walking down the road side by side.

There was a short pause.

It was quite five-and-twenty minutes' walk to the shore, and Selma felt that it could not pass in total silence; but for the moment, though why it should have been so she could not have explained, she was unable to produce a single remark, even upon so simple a subject as the weather. She was much relieved when the unconscious cause of her embarrassing position broke the silence by saying suddenly to her bearer:

"Does you live here?"

He seemed to rouse himself from thoughts of his own at the sound of the little voice, and he withdrew his eyes from the distant horizon, on which they had been rather elaborately fixed as though to prevent their wandering to the figure by his side, to meet Elsie's enquiring face, and answer cheerily:

"No, I live a long way off!"

Selma seized the opening, and dashed valiantly into the conversation.

"The country about here is beautiful, isn't it?" she said.

"Very!" he answered, quickly. "Do you know it well?"

The conversation from this excellent starting-point should have gone on swimmingly; but, of course, he could not

speak to her without turning his head towards her, and as she met his eyes, Selma felt her cheeks grow pink and hot under her shady hat, and her own eyes dropped hastily. She was so well accustomed to the admiration with which men always looked at her that it seemed to her their ordinary expression, and she simply never noticed it at all; but she had never before been looked at quite as this man looked at her, and though she did not resent it, it rendered her entirely incapable of carrying on the conversation. Fortunately Elsie saved her the trouble.

"We live a long way off, too," she remarked, reflectively. "We live in London, don't we, Selma? Oh, please"—with a sudden little cry, and a clutch at the throat of her friend—"oh, please don't tumble Elsie!"

He laughed apologetically, and not quite freely.

"Did I nearly tumble Elsie?" he said. "I'm very sorry. So you are Elsie!"

There was a moment's pause, and then he turned to Selma with a new expression on his face, and a shade of constraint in his frank manner. He was evidently anxious to make conversation, for he produced the brilliant and original remark:

"What wonderful weather we are having!" But the sight of the lovely, flushed face she turned to him as she cast about in her mind for an equally inspiring response, apparently overwhelmed him with confusion, and he went on, breathlessly, as he looked back again at Elsie:

"What a pretty name Elsie is, and what a pretty bonnet you have! Will you tell me how old you are?"

"I'm five," was the prompt and confidential response. "Dick comes next—he's quite old, he's eleven. Nettie—"

Elsie's catalogue of her family's respective ages was cut short by a little cry from Selma.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I've lost my charm!"

She stopped short in her quick walk as she spoke, and the man beside her stopped too, looking at her in blank bewilderment.

"I—I beg your pardon," he said, "you've lost—what?"

"My charm," she answered, "from my châtélaine. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Shall we go back, and look for it," said he; "is it—is it a large thing?"

Selma tried to laugh, but her eyes were bright with the tears which always rose so readily to them as she said:

"Oh, no; thank you very much. It's such a little thing, we should never find it—I may have dropped it somewhere in the wood. Please don't mind about it, it can't be helped; only—only it was given me a long time ago by a friend, and I was fond of it. Shall we go on?" She moved on as she spoke, and he followed her reluctantly.

"What was it like?" he asked.

"Oh, only a little gold heart," she answered, trying to speak lightly. "Please don't trouble about it. Look, Elsie, there is the sea. Mother will think we are lost!"

As she spoke they reached the turn of the road from which a narrow lane led down to the seashore, and Elsie's friend stopped short.

"Is—are all your party there?" he asked.

"Yes," said Selma, wondering rather at the question; and then she said, hesitatingly, and rather to her own surprise, "Will you—will you not come and let Elsie's mother thank you for herself? She will be so much obliged to you."

He reddened suddenly all over his bronzed face, and hesitated for a moment. Then he put the child down rather abruptly.

"You are very kind," he said; "no, I won't do that, thanks. Good evening!" and before Selma could recover from her astonishment, or Elsie could thoroughly realise that she was standing on her own two tired little feet, he had turned the corner of the road by which they had come, and disappeared. At the same moment two of the Cornish boys ran round the other end of the lane from the shore, and greeted Selma and Elsie with a shout of surprise.

"Wherever have you been, Elsie?" they called, instinctively addressing their little sister, and not her unusual companion. "We've been hunting and shouting and tearing about all over the place, and you look as if you had been standing there all the time. What are you looking for?"

"He's gone!" responded the child, as they all four met in the middle of the lane.

"Who's gone?" demanded one of her brothers, while the other said:

"Please, Selma, mother's rather anxious; shall I run on and tell her you're all right?"

"We'll all run," answered Selma, hastily. "Jim, take Elsie's other hand."

Come, darling—that's right," and three minutes later they ran literally into the arms of the whole Cornish family, and every one was asking questions at once. At last Elsie's shrill little voice rose suddenly above all the others, as Selma was explaining, and apologising to Mrs. Cornish a little aside.

"He found us in the wood," she announced. "And he was a nice, big man—wasn't he, Selma?—and he carried Elsie all the way. It's a pity Selma's too big to be carried. He kept on looking at her all the time, and I s'pect he must have been finking 'bout that!"

A shout of laughter greeted this observation, and all the cousins and Mrs. Cornish turned simultaneously to Selma.

"My dear," said her aunt, "I hope he wasn't rude? He was on his way home from work, I suppose?" And then, surprised at Selma's crimson cheeks, she added, in a lower voice: "Was it unpleasant, my dear?"

There was a bright colour in Selma's cheeks as she answered, and her words seemed to tumble over one another in a way very unusual to her.

"Oh no, auntie," she said. "He was—it wasn't—it was a gentleman."

A sudden silence fell upon the assembled Cornishes. Not one of them dared to tease Selma on such a subject as they would have teased one of themselves, and an awkward consciousness took possession of them that the laugh had been a mistake. There was a moment's pause, and then Selma, with a quick, curious movement, as if she was throwing something from her, flung herself into the breach.

"It was an adventure," she cried, gaily; "really and truly an adventure. There we were up a tree—as the boys say—only we were at the foot of a tree; and there we should have stayed, if the birds had been kind enough to feed us, until Elsie grew up, and I grew grey. But Providence created a young man—a nice, blue-eyed young man—on purpose to walk through that particular wood at that particular moment. He came from nowhere, and—he has gone back to where he came from. It's my belief that he wasn't real at all, and I shall take him for my own young man. Auntie, have you had tea? Elsie and I are starving, simply, aren't we, darling?"

Tea had been waiting for nearly an hour, and the sentiments of the whole party found a mouthpiece in Nettie, who

observed, in a tone of extreme satisfaction, as they all arranged themselves on the sand in the poses each found most suitable to the consumption of food under the circumstances:

"Tea is real, at all events!"

"Yes, Nettie, tea is real. But, after all, what is tea?" returned Selma, with mock pathos. She had seated herself next to Helen, throwing her hat down on the sand by her side as she did so, and she half propped herself against her sister's shoulder, her soft, dark hair all ruffled about her forehead as she continued, in the same tone: "Do you consider tea a substitute for a nice young man, Nettie—some cake, please—for a handsome young man, with beautiful blue eyes, and nice curly brown hair? I can't console myself with fleeting joys like tea. I've lost my heart to an unreality. Oh—"—her flushed, excited face changed suddenly—"oh, talking of hearts, Nell, I have had a real loss—my charm!"

"Your little gold heart—the thing Mr. Tyrrell gave you when—"

"Yes!" interposed Selma, hastily. "I am so sorry."

"Oh, Selma, so am I!"

Mr. Tyrrell had given the little trinket to his pupil many years ago, when she had conquered her first great difficulty; and Helen knew how fond her sister had been of it. She was rather surprised that the cloud over Selma's face passed almost immediately.

"Where do they make young men like that?" she exclaimed, merrily, addressing the company at large, as she handed her cup to the boy who was sitting—or rather sprawling—next her, that it might go to Mrs. Cornish to be refilled. "No, thank you, Jim, I'm not hungry," as the same boy handed her bread and butter, with such grace as his position allowed. "He was like a young man out of a story-book, with bronzed features, and powerful hands, and all that kind of thing. I believe he was specially made for this occasion only, wasn't he, Elsie?"

Elsie looked seriously up into the sparkling, dancing eyes as Selma leant suddenly across Helen with a swift, graceful movement, and turned back the big sun-bonnet, which nearly hid the little face.

"What is 'peshally made,' Selma?" she asked.

Selma laughed a gay, excited, ringing laugh.

"What is 'peshally made,' Elsie?" she repeated. "Well, it means that no one but you and I has ever seen your 'big, nice man.' And it means that we shan't see him ever again. Do you see?"

"Not see him ever again?" said Elsie, regretfully. "Yes, Elsie sees. Ian't it a pity, Selma, he was maked like that?"

Selma laughed again; and declaring that adventure had taken away her appetite, she let herself drop gradually backward on the sand, with her hands clasped under her head, and began to talk. She was in one of those moods of wild spirits in which she now and then indulged, in which she was perfectly irresistible. Nothing was too fanciful or too ridiculous for her to say. Everything done or said by any member of the party seemed to call out her sense of fun; and she absolutely revelled in nonsense—nonsense which was always graceful and fascinating, as Selma in her wildest moments could not fail to be. Her eyes danced, and her cheeks glowed, her sweet, bright voice rang with merriment, and her whole personality seemed radiant with happy youth and excitement.

She kept every one, from Mrs. Cornish to little Elsie, in fits of laughter until the time came for going home, and then there was a general clamour from the young Cornishes "to go in the carriage with Selma." There were two wagonettes, and a division was finally effected by which Selma and two or three boys and girls, with Helen and Humphrey to act as ballast, were packed off as the first detachment.

During the first mile the occupants of the other carriage could catch the laughing tones of Selma's voice as she made fresh fun out of everything they passed, and were devoured with envy at not being able to hear the words. But gradually her voice dropped out of the chatter kept up between Helen and the younger ones. She had been the last to get in, and was sitting at the end of the wagonette, steadying herself with one slender hand on the end rail, and—half-unconsciously and involuntarily at first—her eyes wandered from the laughing faces on her right to what lay beyond Humphrey, as he sat immediately opposite her.

The moon was rising, and her words became fewer and less lively, and her voice grew softer and slower. Under the magical spell of the moon the landscape seemed to evolve itself, mysterious and unfamiliar in that always mysterious light, out of the

vague shadowiness of summer darkness, and, little by little, all unconsciously, she moved her head so that she saw nothing but that slowly strengthening light, stealing on so peacefully, conquering darkness so gently and imperceptibly. The voices about her died into distance and unreality, she hardly heard them; the actual world seemed to recede and retreat, leaving her alone in that mysterious world where every soul must be alone for ever with its own longings and its own regrets—the world of beauty, whereof the atmosphere is aspiration. Her eyes grew deep and dark, and her face, very beautiful with that sensitive receptive hush on it, paled slightly as she watched, and trembled a little now and then.

There was another silent occupant of the carriage, who watched her face during the drive almost as intently as she watched the rising moon, and as Humphrey gave her his hand when they reached home that she might follow Helen—the children had jumped out of the carriage and rushed in—he said, quietly:

"It has been lovely, hasn't it?"

Selma flushed hotly, and turned quickly towards him. He smiled slightly, and she exclaimed:

"Humphrey, how did you know? How like you! Why, you had your back to it!"

"I saw it in your face," he said, with a smile; "and I saw the sky behind you."

"It—it took hold of me, somehow," she said, shyly; and then, as he nodded without a word, she slipped her arm through her sister's, and smiled brightly up at him, as she exclaimed: "Nell, you've given me the very nicest brother in the world! It's sweet of you!"

Helen laughed.

"I'm so glad you're satisfied, Selma!" she said. "You are satisfied, too, are you not, Humphrey?"

And as he turned to her, with that look in his eyes which never shone in them for any one but Helen—a look so different from the sympathetic interest they held for Selma, that when it lighted them they hardly seemed to belong to the same man—they all three moved away into the house, and the two girls ran upstairs, nominally to get ready for supper, though, as Selma observed, supper was a farce, when it seemed about three minutes since tea.

Selma had just tossed her hat on to the bed when they heard the larger wagonette,

with the rest of the party, roll up the drive. There was a stir of arrival, an unusual kind of cry, as though every one downstairs had suddenly and simultaneously exclaimed, and Nettie dashed headlong into the room, and cast herself breathlessly on to a chair.

"What do you think?" she gasped.

"Oh, what, Nettie?"

"Roger's come!"

"Come!" exclaimed Helen and Selma, in the same breath. "Not really?"

"He has! He was waiting in the breakfast-room. Father wouldn't say until mother came, and I haven't seen him yet. Oh, isn't it exciting!"

And Nettie bounded up from her chair and cast herself frantically upon Helen's neck.

"He wasn't to have been in England for another week or ten days," said Helen as she kissed the girl. "Oh, isn't auntie delighted? Was the letter delayed, I wonder?"

"Yes—no—I mean a little. He meant it to be a surprise. Oh, isn't it too thrilling!" cried Nettie, again, as Mrs. Cornish's voice, curiously excited and unsteady, was heard calling from the foot of the stairs.

"Helen, Helen and Nettie, come down, my dears."

Helen turned to Selma, as the excited Nettie dashed out of the room as impetuously as she had dashed in, and put two quite trembling hands up to her hair; her cheeks were very rosy.

"Am I—tidy, Selma?" she said, hurriedly. "Humphrey is so very fond of Roger, you know. He was talking about him this afternoon. Put me straight, Selma. Oh, don't you think I'd better change my dress?"

"You're beautiful, dear," answered Selma, reassuringly, as she gave a few quick, deft touches to her sister's hair. "You needn't do anything at all. There, go down."

"You're coming, Selma? Oh, do come with me!"

Selma laughed.

"Very well, Nell," she said; "we'll go down together."

They were far too preoccupied with the introduction before Helen to give a thought to the state of Selma's personal appearance. The wavy hair was rather loose and tumbled, and made the face it framed—pinkier in the cheeks than usual with excitement—look even younger and lovelier than usual; she still had in her

dress a bunch of white roses she had gathered in the morning, withered now, but still fragrant and graceful.

They went down the shallow old staircase arm-in-arm, and as she laid her hand upon the drawing-room door, Selma turned and smiled brightly and encouragingly at the palpitating Helen. She turned the handle and pushed the door a little open, and then, quite suddenly, to Helen's astonishment, she stopped short; her whole face changed, and a crimson flush rushed over it, dying her very throat.

"Oh, Helen!" she whispered; "oh, Helen!"

From within the room, which was hidden from the two girls on the threshold by a screen, a man's voice was audible—a full, manly voice which Helen had never heard before. But before she could sufficiently recover from her surprise either to go on into the room or to ask an explanation of her sister, little Elsie ran across the hall towards them, and Selma caught her quickly by the hand.

"Come in, Elsie!" she said, rapidly; "Helen, we mustn't wait!" And she pushed Helen gently before her, following closely with Elsie's hand held tightly in her own, her eyes fixed on the ground, and her colour coming and going as she breathed.

Mrs. Cornish's words, "Roger, here is Helen!" were not needed. The tall man who was standing between herself and her husband near the drawing-room window turned quickly as the girls entered, and as she saw his face Elsie dropped Selma's hand and ran past Helen towards him, crying delightedly:

"Oh, it's him! It's him! Selma, he wasn't 'peashally made!"

CONCERNING SOME DINNERS IN OUR AUGUSTAN AGE.

NUMEROUS allusions to dinners, all of more or less interest, occur in Swift's well-known "Journal to Stella," and fill the reader's mind with the pleasantest of reminiscences. We go with him to Lord Halifax's, at Hampton Court, where he meets Sir Paul Methuen, the maker of the Portugal treaty, and Sir Francis Delaval, an active politician. "I walked in the gardens," says Swift, "saw the cartoons of Raphael, and other things, and with great

difficulty got from Halifax, who would have kept me to-morrow to show me his house, and plate, and improvements." We follow him into the City with Sir Andrew Fountain, dine at the chop-house with Will Pate, the learned woolen-draper; afterwards peeping in at the china shops and booksellers'; and before parting drink a couple of pints of white wine at the tavern. On one occasion, being disappointed at a friend's, he is forced to retire to a "blind chop-house," where he dines upon a basin of bad broth, and three chops of mutton—for tenpence. On another, he accompanies Sir Andrew to a tavern, where they are made to pay sixteen shillings for a couple of bottles of wine—Portugal and Florence—and a neck of mutton—dressed à la Maintenon—which "a dog could not eat." His dinners with Harley, the statesman, afterwards Earl of Oxford, who always treated him with special distinction, were of too frequent occurrence to be particularised.

Then, again, he dines at the "Devil Tavern," Fleet Street, with Addison and Dr. Garth, author of "The Dispensary"—the latter treating; and with Addison and Steele, and Addison's sister, married to one Monsieur Sartre, a Frenchman, prebendary of Westminster, who has "a delicious house and garden"; and with Addison and Dick Stewart, Lord Mountjoy's brother, the former acting as host, and getting half-fuddled, as was too often his way, while Swift kept his head cool by mixing water with his wine. He is subject to fits of giddiness—premonitory of the brain disorder that clouded his declining years—and temperance is his necessity as well as his choice. We follow him to the house of the brilliant Secretary of State, Mr. Saint John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, where the only other guests are a Mr. Lewis and the celebrated physician and hot Tory, Mr. Friend, who wrote the narrative of the Earl of Peterborough's splendid actions in Spain. "The Secretary uses him with all the kindness in the world." Matt Prior drops in after dinner; and in the course of conversation, Saint John says, not too courteously, that the best thing he has read is not Prior's, but Swift's sparkling lines on Vanbrugh's house, which the author "does not reckon so very good neither."

He attends the Duke of Ormond, with about fifty other Irish gentlemen, to Skinner's Hall, where the Londonderry Company had laid out three hundred pounds

on the entertainment of their visitors. "Three great tables with the dessert laid in mighty figure. Sir Richard Levinge—the Irish speaker—and I," says Swift, "got discreetly to the head of the second table to avoid the crowd at the first; but it was so cold, and so confounded a noise with the trumpets and hautboys, that I grew weary, and stole away before the second course came on." Another day he dines with Mr. Dartqueneuf, the celebrated epicure; but unhappily he gives us no particulars of the menu. On occasion, however, he can content himself at home with three fresh herrings, which, as he remarks, are wholesome, and a favourite dish of his. I suppose they were served according to his rhyming directions in "Verses Made for Fruit-women," etc.:

Eat them with pure fresh butter and mustard,
Their bellies are soft and as white as a custard.

Another time he goes with Dartqueneuf—anglicised into Dartneuf—to dine with James, clerk of the kitchen to the Queen, when he has the Queen's wine, and such very fine victuals that he could not eat them. Stew-ple, let me note, was the epicure's favourite dainty. At least he is made to say so in Lord Lyttelton's Dialogue in the shades between him and Apicius, wherein they discuss the subject of good eating as practised by the ancients and moderns. He was a contributor to "The Tatler," and in number two hundred and fifty-two defends the moderate use of wine.

Swift dines one day with the Secretary Saint John, and drinks some of that wine which the Great Duke of Tuscany used to send to Sir William Temple. Swift likes it mightily; but Saint John prefers his usual liquors, champagne and burgundy, and orders his butler to send Swift a chest of the Florence wine on the following day. Lord Anglesey, George Granville—afterwards Lord Lansdowne—General Webb, the hero of Wynndael, whom the Tories pitted against Marlborough—Thackeray introduces him in his "Esmond"—these at different times are his hosts. At George Granville's he goes away early, and believes the rest would soon be fuddled.

"It will not do," he says, "with Prior's lean carcase. I drink little, miss my glass often, put water in my wine, and go away before the rest, which I take to be a good receipt for sobriety. Let us put it into rhyme, and so make a proverb:

Drink little at a time ;
Put water with your wine ;
Miss your glass when you can ;
And go off the first man.

... I ate but little to-day, and of the gentlest meat. I refused ham and pigeons, pease-soup, stewed beef, cold salmon, because they were too strong." As time passes on, he begins to dine frequently with the Vanhomrighs, developing that intimacy with Vanessa (Hester Vanhomrigh) which had so pitiful a termination. He dines with Matt Prior and Bishop (then Dean) Atterbury ; and one wishes he had recorded in his "Journal" even but a few of the good things that must have been said by such a trio ! He goes to Buckleberry, Secretary Saint John's country seat. "Mr. Secretary," he says, 'was a perfect country gentleman at Buckleberry ; he smoked tobacco with one or two neighbours ; he enquired after the wheat in such a field ; he went to visit his grounds, and knew all their names ; he and his lady saw me to my chamber just in the country fashion.' At Windsor Castle he dines at the board of green cloth. 'It is much the best table in England, and costs the Queen a thousand pounds a month while she is at Windsor or Hampton Court ; and is the only mark of magnificence or hospitality I ever see in the Queen's family ; it is designed to entertain foreign ministers, and people of quality, who came to see the Queen, and have no place to dine at.'

Lord Abercorn entertains him with "a fine fat haunch of venison, that smelt rarely on one side ;" and he goes to Lord Peterborough's, at Parson's Green, to dine with his secretary, lamenting that he cannot eat any of the plentiful fruit, except one fig. "I envy people manching and naunching peaches and grapes," he says, 'and I not daring to eat a bit.' Again, he dines with the Lord Treasurer—the Duke of Shrewsbury ; Lord Rivers, the two secretaries, Mr. Granville, and Matt Prior, being of the party. Witty Dr. Arbuthnot is another of his hosts ; and he two of them draw up a sham subscription-form for a book, to be called a 'History of the Maids of Honour since Harry the Eighth, showing they make the best wives,' etc., five shillings to be paid down, and five shillings upon delivery of the volume. They sent it to the Maids of Honour when they came in to supper ; and it appears that all of them were taken in," and subscribed. One day

he dines with the Queen's chaplains, and pronounces it the worst provided table at Court. "We ate on pewter ; every chaplain, when he is made a dean, gives a piece of plate, and so they have got a little, some of it very old. One who was made Dean of Peterborough—a small deanery—said he would give no plate ; he was only Dean of Peterborough." When he dines at home, he makes shift with "a bit of mutton and a pot of ale" from the nearest cook-shop ; but he is seldom reduced to this extremity. He dines out almost every day, and knows the table of almost every man of distinction. His "Journal" is a complete register of his dinners ; unfortunately, he records nothing of the conversation that lightened them. Bolingbroke, Harley, Prior, Arbuthnot, Sir Samuel Garth—what happy thoughts and brilliant mots he might have handed down to a delighted posterity, if he had seen fit ! It is curious at times to see the pride of this wayward, gloomy spirit kindled into fire. Once he was to have dined at Lady Ashburnham's, but as she sent her coach for him, and did not call in person, he refused to go. He would never allow any one to suppose that they patronised him ; on the contrary, they were to believe that he did them an honour—~~as~~, indeed, he did—by accepting of their hospitality. His tone is that of a King towards his subjects ; or, at all events, of a King towards his equals.

I need hardly carry the record further ; but here are two or three entries too good to be omitted :

"I dined to-day with a lady of my acquaintance, who was sick, in her bed-chamber"—probably Mrs. Vanhomrigh—"upon three herrings and a chicken. The dinner was my bespeaking." Again : "I dined privately with a friend on a herring and chicken, and half a flask of bad Florence." And yet again : "I hate Lent ; I hate different diets, and fumenty, and butter, and herb porridge, and sour, devout faces of people who only put on religion for seven weeks. I dined with Dr. Arbuthnot, and had a true Lenten dinner, not in point of victuals, but spleen ; for his wife and a child or two were sick in the house, and that was full as mortifying as fish." "Lord Masham made me go home with him to-night to eat boiled oysters. Take oysters, wash them clean, that is, wash their shells clean ; then put your oysters in an earthen pot, with their hollow sides down ; then put this pot,

covered, into a great kettle with water, and so let them boil. Your oysters are boiled in their own liquor; do not mix water." At a later period of his life, when exiled to an Irish deanery, he wrote: "I live in the corner of a vast unfurnished house. My family consists of a steward, a groom, a helper in my stable, a footman, and an old maid, who are all at board wages; and when I do not dine abroad or make an entertainment—which last is very rare—I eat a mutton pie and drink half a pint of wine." When he dined abroad, he allowed himself "a pint at noon and half as much at night."

The etiquette of the Court was not relieved in its cumbersome pressure, nor was the Royal cuisine improved in the direction of grace and refinement, under the first two sovereigns of the House of Hanover. George the First brought with him from his electorate a hearty Hanoverian appetite; and in his partiality for substantial fare and strong liquors, differed not from the mass of his new subjects. As Elector of Hanover he had kept a liberal table; had had his *maitre d'hôtel*, his French cook, and his body cook, two inferior cooks, six assistant cooks, two masters of the roast, a pastry-baker, a pie-baker, four pastry-cooks, three scullions, and so on. The Court life under this dull but honest sovereign, who neither loved England nor her people, but did his duty by both, according to his lights, was unspeakably heavy; and everybody breathed more freely when he slept with his ancestors, and George the Second reigned in his stead. But the tone of society—or of that limited portion of it which arrogates to itself a capital letter—was no purer or healthier. We may learn all about it from the memoirs and chroniques scandaleuses of the time, which are unusually numerous and exceptionally frank. What a strange and varied picture do they put before us! How crowded is the gallery of notabilities to which they admit us! The choleric, courageous, straightforward, sensual, good-natured monarch, and the clever, cynical wife whom he loved in his own queer way, who ruled him so adroitly, and served him so devotedly; their discordant family of sons and daughters; the burly, deep-drinking, coarse-tongued, but able and astute minister, Sir Robert Walpole, to whom England owes so great a debt of gratitude; Pulteney, Earl of Bath, the brilliant Carteret, the accomplished Chesterfield; Hervey and Horace Walpole

and Lady Mary Wortley Montague, a woman of rare courage and strong brain; Pitt, the Great Commoner, the thunder of whose eloquence we still seem to hear, the victories of whose daring statesmanship we still enjoy; the shambling, shuffling Newcastle; amiable Mrs. Howard; jolly Mary Bellenden, handsome Lady Hervey, the fair Lepell, and the beautiful Miss Gunning—the Countess of Coventry and Duchess of Argyle—Garrick and Quin, Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Bracegirdle; Swift and Pope; Fielding, Smollett, and Richardson; Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Goldsmith; with a background of Mohawks, duellists, "bloods," and highwaymen—a motley company.

Addison made no pretensions to gastronomic connoisseurship. He loved a good dinner, but one on the old English lines—a couple of plain dishes: anything simple and natural. He tells us that his maxim was: That he keeps the greatest table who has the most valuable company at it. His weakness was for a bottle, or even two or three bottles of old wine; but he liked to drink them along with two or three old friends. He seems, however, to have taken wine partly to conquer a constitutional shyness. It was not until after the first bottle that his tongue was loosed, that he conquered his *mauvaise honte* and was able to do himself justice. "It is reported," says a writer in "The Connoisseur," "to have been one of the most exquisite entertainments to the choice spirits in the beginning of the eighteenth century to get Addison and Steele together in company for the evening. Steele entertained them till he was tipsy, when the same wine that stupefied him only served to elevate Addison, who took up the ball just as Steele dropped it, and kept it up for the rest of the evening." When thus "elevated," Addison, by the consent of all his contemporaries, was the prince of talkers. Lady Mary Wortley Montague said that she had known all the wits, and that Addison was the best company in the world. Swift did not love Addison; but he confessed to Stella that, after all, he had never known a more agreeable associate. And Dr. Young—assuredly no mean an authority—said that when he was at his ease he went on in a noble strain of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every hearer.

Before he married the Countess of Warwick, his chief companions were Steeles, Davenant, Budgell, Ambrose

Philips, and others of the wits. He used to breakfast with one or other of them at his lodgings in Saint James's Place; dine at taverns with them; then adjourn to Button's Coffee House; and thence to some tavern again in the evening for supper. He often sat late, says Johnson, and drank too much wine. He was a member of the Kit-cat Club, and a regular attendant at its meetings in Shoe Lane, or at the "Upper Flask" on the borders of Hampstead Heath.

It is a tradition of Holland House—which became Addison's after his marriage—that, when composing, he would walk up and down the picture-gallery—afterwards called the long room—with a bottle of wine at each end of it, which he finished "during the operation." The tradition is probably an exaggeration, based on his well-known weakness.

We are left in no doubt as to his individual tastes. In a diverting paper in "The Spectator" he ridicules with his easy humour the mania for foreign dishes, exhorting his readers to stick to the food of their forefathers, and to reconcile themselves to beef and mutton. This was the diet, he says, of that hardy race of mortals who won the fields of Cressy and Agincourt. "The uncrowned King Arthur," he continues, "is generally looked upon as the first who ever sat down to a whole roasted ox—which was certainly the best way to preserve the gravy—and it is further added that he and his knights sat about it at his round table, and usually consumed it to the very bones. The Black Prince was a professed lover of the brisket; not to mention the history of the sirloin, or the institution of the order of the Beef-eaters"—Addison appears to have been ignorant of their real origin—"which are all so many evident and undeniable marks of the great respect which our warlike predecessors have paid to this excellent food. The tables of the ancient gentry of this nation were covered thrice a day with hot roast beef; and I am credibly informed by an antiquary who has searched the registers in which the bills of fare of the Court are recorded, that instead of tea, and bread and butter, which have prevailed of late years, the maids of honour in Queen Elizabeth's time were allowed three rumps of beef for their breakfast."

Though the English aristocracy and gentry had degenerated, Addison rejoices that the common people still kept up the taste of their ancestors; for what kind of

work, he asks, would our countrymen have made at Blenheim and Ramillies, if they had been fed with fricassees and ragouts?

He goes on to describe his visit "last summer" to the house of a friend, who was a great admirer of the French cookery. When he sat down to dinner, he found the table covered with a great variety of unknown dishes, and as he could not guess their contents, he was unable to help himself. The one immediately before him he took to be a roasted porcupine; but afterwards ascertained that it was only a larded turkey. Among other dainties, he caught sight of something like a pheasant; but to his great surprise, his friend told him it was a rabbit, a sort of meat he never cared for. "At last," he says, "I discovered with some joy a pig at the lower end of the table, and begged a gentleman that was near it to cut me a piece." But the master of the house telling him it had been whipped to death—a barbarous practice which was supposed to increase the delicacy of the flesh—he felt unable to eat of an animal that had suffered so cruelly. "I was now in great hunger and confusion, when, methought, I smelled the agreeable savour of roast beef, but could not tell from which dish it arose, though I did not question; but it lay disguised in one of them. Upon turning my head, I saw a noble sirloin on the side table, smoking in the most delicious manner. I had recourse to it more than once, and could not see, without some indignation, that substantial English dish banished in so ignominious a manner, to make way for French kick-shaws."

Addison is better pleased with the dessert, which, when all was ranged in its proper order, looked like a very beautiful winter-piece. There were several pyramids of candied sweetmeats that hung like icicles, with fruits scattered up and down, and birds in an artificial kind of frost. "At the same time, there were great quantities of cream beaten up into a snow, and near them little plates of sugar-plums, disposed like so many heaps of hailstones, with a multitude of congelations in jellies of various colours."

I come next to speak of Steele. He was a good-humoured host and a companionable guest; addicted, as everybody knows, to "thin potations," and fond of staying out o' nights, excusing himself thereafter to his "dear Prue" with charming grace. When

Addison was in the company he shone with a subdued light ; but, in the absence of his Mentor, did more justice to his admirable faculties. His hospitality outran his means, and the sanguine, lively, frank-hearted fellow was constantly involved in pecuniary difficulties. "One day," says Johnson, "having invited to his house a great number of persons of the first quality, they were surprised at the number of liveries which surrounded the table ; and after dinner, when wines and mirth had set them free from the observation of a rigid ceremony, one of them inquired of Sir Richard how such an expensive train of domestics could be consistent with his fortune. Sir Richard very frankly confessed that they were followers of whom he would willingly be rid. And then, being asked why he did not discharge them, declared that they were bailiffs, who had introduced themselves with an execution, and whom, since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish with liveries, that they might do him credit while they stopped."

Like almost all the men of letters, his contemporaries, Steele was a diner-out. He frequented the dinners of the Whitehall Club, at the "Upper Flask Tavern," in Hampstead, and was a constant attendant at Button's, at Will's, at Dick's, and at the "Fountain," the "Bull's Head," and the "Thatched House."

In "The Tatler" he takes occasion, in number two hundred and sixty-three, to comment upon the later hours which were growing fashionable in society for its various functions. Calling at the house of one friend, who adhered to the old way—"super vias antiquas stare"—he found that he had just set down to dinner at eleven o'clock ; and this circumstance suggested to him a train of reflection.

"Our grandmothers," he says, "though they were wont to sit up the last in the family, were all of them fast asleep at the same hours that their daughters are busy at crimp and basset. Modern statesmen are concerting schemes, and engaged in the depth of politics, at the time when their forefathers were laid down quietly to rest, and had nothing in their heads but dreams. As we have thus thrown business and pleasure into the hours of rest, and by that means made the natural night but half as long as it should be, we are forced to piece it out with a great part of the morning ; so that near two-thirds of the nation lie fast asleep for several hours in

broad daylight. . . . If you would see the innovations which have been made among us in this particular, you may only look into the hours of colleges, where they still dine at eleven, and sup. at six, which were doubtless the hours of the whole nation at the time when those places were founded. That at present the courts of justice are scarce opened in Westminster-hall at the time when William Rufus used to go to dinner in it. . . . I have sometimes thought to draw up a memorial in the behalf of supper against dinner, setting forth, that the said dinner has made several encroachments upon the said supper, and entered very far upon his frontiers ; that he has banished him out of several families, and in all has driven him from his head-quarters, and forced him to make his retreat into the hours of midnight ; and, in short, that he is now in danger of being entirely confounded and lost in a breakfast."

In Steele's time the middle classes dined, as most of them do now, about two o'clock ; but the fashionable hour was four, or a little later. Thus Swift says in his "Journal of a Modern Lady," 1718 :

This business of importance o'er,
And Madam almost dressed by four,
The footman, in his usual phrase,
Comes up with, "Madam, dinner stays."

But in "The Country Life," the dinner-hour in rural society is put much earlier :

At two, or after, we return all ;
From the four elements assembling,
Warned by the bell, all folks come tumbling.
Now water's brought and dinner's done ;
With "Church and King," the ladies gone.

Pope—"Queen Anne's pale little valedudinarian poet," as Mrs. Browning calls him—was prevented by physical causes from indulging in the luxuries of the table, except on special occasions, when he always paid the consequences of transgression. Nevertheless he was an inveterate diner-out and a liberal host. While engaged in his Homeric labours he frequently sought relief by a visit to town, and attended the séances of the Scribblers' Club, to which Swift, Parnell, Gay, and Arbuthnot belonged ; or those of the older and more influential October Club. At both these places Pope's presence was ever welcome ; and it is to be feared that sometimes he was led into convivial outbursts as incompatible with his constitutional infirmity as inconsistent with the even tenor of his ordinary life. At his Twickenham villa he received a continual circle of guests,

and was never weary of showing them the beauties of his garden and the wonders of his grotto.

He was fond, it is said, of highly-seasoned dishes, sweetmeats, and drams; and his death was absurdly imputed by some of his acquaintances to a silver saucepan, in which he used to warm lampreys. He was seldom happier, perhaps, than during his sojourn with Allen, Lord Bathurst, whom Burke describes as "one of the most amiable men of his age," at his seat of Oakley, near Cirencester. Pope, no doubt, felt the better for the old Lord's gaiety of temper and high animal spirits, which was manifested in a very lively manner on one occasion, when his son, the austere Lord Chancellor, having retired from the dinner-table with some remarks on the advantage of early hours, he proposed to his guest that they should crack another bottle, now that the old gentleman had gone to bed. In a letter to Martha Blount, Pope describes his manner of life in this rural retreat:

"I write an hour or two every morning, then ride out a-hunting upon the Downs, eat heartily, talk tender sentiments with Lord B.; or draw plans for houses and garden, open avenues, cut glades, plant firs, contrive waterworks; all very fine and beautiful in our own imagination. At night we play commerce, and play pretty high. . . . I like this course of life so well that I am resolved to stay here till I hear of somebody's being in town that is worth coming after."

He was often at Lord Bolingbroke's, Dawley Farm being within an easy drive from Twickenham. Thither he went to try the recuperative effects of ass's milk, and it was on one of his homeward journeys, in Bolingbroke's carriage and six, that he was overturned in a little river, about a mile from Twickenham. The glasses of the coach were up, and the poet was asleep. On waking, he found the water up to "the knots of his periwig." He tried in vain to lower the glasses; and it was some time before the footman, who had stuck in the mud, could come to his assistance, and, by breaking the window, deliver him from his peril.

He also visited, at Wimbledon, the Duchess of Marlborough. We read of his sending her some pineapples of his own growing, and she sends him a buck, with which he gives a dinner to his friends. "Your bounty," he writes, "has enabled me to make a great figure at Twickenham

these holidays." At Prior Park, near Bath, the residence of the philanthropist, Ralph Allen—the Squire Allworthy of Fielding's "Tom Jones"—he was a frequent guest, and always treated with the warmest and most considerate hospitality.

In his "Imitations of Horace"—book ii, satire 2—our poet alludes to the gross appetites of his contemporaries:

Preach as I please, I doubt my curious men
Will choose a pheasant still before a hen;
Yet hens of Guinea full as good I hold,
Except you eat the feathers green and gold.
Of carps and mullets, why prefer the great,
Though cut in pieces as my lord can eat;
Yet for small turbot's such esteem profess,
Because God made them large, the others less.
Oldfield, with more than hungry throat endued,
Cries, "Send me, gods! a whole hog barbecued!"

RHYME.

PLAYING with words—the pretty toys—
Whose charm nor time nor tide destroys;
Age, subtly creeping, steals away.
The step's light spring, the glances gay,
The joyous echo from the tone,
The laugh that youth can match alone;
But this defies the touch of time,
The gladness of the ringing rhyme.

The mellow metre sounds as clear
As ever to the April ear;
The trumpet-call of martial song
Can bid the sober pulses throng
As gallantly as when, of old,
They thrilled to hear the summons told;
And tired fingers yet can chime
A melody for ringing rhyme.

I send a gay defiance back,
As, treading on my downward track,
Mid moaning winds and fading flowers,
And thickening graves and darkened hours,
I wake the sweet old magic still,
I feel my hand obey my will;
Take up the glove that's flung by Time,
And challenge him, in ringing rhyme.

A TALE OF TURGHUELA.

"TURGHUELA, Turghuela? That's where Maimie Rhodes lives; and that settles the question. I'll go and chance it."

So Geoffrey Dasant wrote off there and then to the Colonial Office, accepting the munificent offer of the post of Government Medical Officer in Turghuela at a salary of two hundred pounds a year.

It could surely be only the light' of

* That is, a hog dressed in West Indian fashion—roasted whole, stuffed with spice, and basted with Madeira wine. In Foote's comic drama of "The Patron," Sir Peter Pepperpot says: "I am invited to dine on a barbecue, and the villains have forgotten my bottle of Chian."

Maimie Rhodes's eyes that could attract a man from England to Turghuela, seeing what a remote, unknown scrap of a place it is, compared with which the other West Indian Islands are great continents astir with the hubbub of mighty issues. In fact, it is so small that it is not mentioned by name in "Whitaker," nor is it otherwise indicated on a map than by a dot, surrounded by dots equally nameless, but all bearing the general title of "The Virgin Islands." For fertile loveliness it is a Garden of Eden. Its miniature ranges of mountains are wooded up to the top with tamarinds, cinnamons, silk-cotton trees, and pouis, whose yellow blossoms splash the sides in broad patches of gold. The air is thick with the scent of bananas, custard-apples, sour-saps, and mangoes, that grow around the little homesteads; and the fields of tall, green canes, on the one sugar estate the island boasts of, rustle pleasantly in the cool sea-breeze. The people, too, seem picturesquely happy; the few whites in their clean drill-suits and straw hats, the negro-women with stately figures set off by the erect poise of their heads tied round with handkerchiefs of gaudy red and yellow, and the little nigger children running about, with naked little bodies shining in the sun.

All of these things aroused Geoffrey Dasant's delight as he landed in Turghuela, and was shown round the place by the vice-president of the island, a versatile gentleman combining the offices of stipendiary magistrate, harbour-master, post-master, registrar, commandant of police, and general dealer in home and colonial produce, who welcomed him with most sincere effusion, and put his house, his servants, and his cattle at the service of the new-comer. Dasant was in such a whirl of new sensations, that it was some time before he found an opportunity for inquiring after Miss Rhodes.

"Dear me!" exclaimed his new friend. "The idea of knowing any one here! I suppose you mean Maimie Rhodes—that was. She's married now. You never heard of it! A man called Conway; lucky beggar. Came over here a year or two ago as overseer on Mount Pleasant, married Maimie, and, on the death of her father, came into possession of the whole estate."

Dasant scarcely heard the latter part of this little speech. The blue faded from the sky, and the glory from the hills. Maimie married! A vague sense of the

futility of things came over him, and he wished himself back in England. But in Turghuela he was, and in Turghuela he had to remain, and to learn the quaint ways of his dusky patients, and to foregather with his spiritual colleague, the Rev. Mr. Jones, who officiated in the tiniest little stone church covered all over with the bell-apple vine, and to meet Maimie just as if nothing had ever passed between them, and to dine at her husband's table; and, finally, to keep a stiff upper-lip whilst working out like a man the lot he had apportioned unto himself.

A surprise even more disagreeable than the news of Maimie's marriage, was his introduction to her husband. Mountains meet sometimes, says the proverb, and then earthquakes follow. There was no earthquake in this case at Turghuela, but the two men glared for a moment at each other, until Conway put out his hand, and with an assumption of rough geniality, said:

"Come, we mustn't be bad friends here. Let bygones be bygones."

And then Dasant had perforce to accept the olive-branch proffered in the shape of the great sun-glazed hand, although he felt the ashes of an almost forgotten disgust burst into flame within him.

Maimie received him with a glad welcome she hardly strove to hide. She was still the same sweet, unsophisticated little girl he had fallen in love with two years before in England, in spite of a certain seriousness of matronly dignity which seemed to him quaintly incongruous.

"What on earth made you come out to this heaven-forsaken place?" she asked one day. He had been dining at Mount Pleasant, and it being crop-time, Conway had rushed off to the works, leaving the two alone on the verandah.

"I don't think it is that," he replied, lazily enjoying the moonlight and the scent of the orange-blossoms in the garden. "I had no idea that Turghuela was such a paradise—as far as God made it."

"You are as bad as a woman. You attack side-issues instead of coming to the point. I asked you why you came out."

He looked up quickly at her. Her head was turned aside in critical contemplation of a twig of jasmine she was twisting. Still, he could not tell her the exact truth.

"What makes men do silly things?"

"Then it was simply your own folly that brought you here!"

"As it has turned out. How have you managed to become so argumentative! When I knew you in England you were the least logical of little girls."

"I have lived many years since then. I am an old married woman now." And then, after a pause: "Why did you never write to me?"

"Why did you leave England so suddenly, without letting me know? One Sunday you were full of plans for enjoying your visit, and the next, when I had toiled ten miles to see you, I learnt that you had sailed away on Wednesday."

"I know," she said, rising suddenly, and throwing away the jasmine stalk, "it was a mistake. I must go and see what Petrena is doing with that coffee."

"It was a mistake." That was enigmatical. Dasent walked homewards very thoughtful, not without certain misgivings, which the sound of Conway's voice and that of a woman, raised suddenly in angry altercation some yards in front of him on the road, did not allay.

"You lie, you black beast," said Conway, and his tone broke harshly upon the moonlight stillness.

"Whether I'm black or whether I'm mulatter, don't make any difference. Thar's white people isn't good enough to pull jiggers out of black people's foot. O me Fathers! Mr. Conway, you're real bad. When you're not drinking rum, you're hangering around respectable people's da'ghters, and poor Miss Maimie up yonder treated like a darg."

"Hold your tongue," said Conway, savagely. "Here's five dollars."

"Not for five dollars nor for fifty dollars. You can keep your dirty dollars," replied the indignant matron, and then she paused, as Dasent passed by.

The moonlight was too strong for the two men to pretend not to recognise each other. They exchanged a curt good-night, and Dasent went on his way.

This scrap of conversation confirmed in his mind the vague rumours that were afloat in the island concerning Mr. Conway's domestic affairs.

"It is hard enough," he wrote to his sister in England, "to see the girl one cares for married to another man; but when this man has been known to one as a scamp, and shows himself now to be a drunken brute, it makes one simply frantic. And Maimie—— Well, she regrets.

Don't be afraid, sia. If I felt I could not trust myself, I should not write to you, or I should come home. But I must stay here. A man can't escape his responsibilities by hiding his head from them, ostrich-fashion."

So Dasent resolved to abide in Turghuela, and see the play played out. Meanwhile, he led an easy, pleasant life, as far as material pleasures were concerned. He doctored the lazy, good-natured negroes to their hearts' content, and gained their sincere esteem as much by his kindness as by the uncompromising potency of his medicines; and in his leisure hours idled the time away, bathing in the many-coloured sea, playing strange Arcadian tennis on the coarse, burnt-up patch of field adjoining the Parsonage, or chatting in the cool of a verandah while the tropical noonday sun was blazing. He saw as little as he possibly could of Conway, who, on his side, tried to effect his policy of conciliation. But it is not easy to avoid meeting one's neighbour in Turghuela, and Dasent saw more of him and of Maimie than was good for his peace of mind. He noticed, too, that Maimie was beginning to look unhappy, and sometimes he would catch a queer, furtive glance she directed at her husband, and worse than all—from a certain point of view—he saw an unmistakable light in her grey eyes when Conway had freed them of his presence. Once he vaguely hinted at returning to England. She looked at him half-frightened, and laid her hand upon his arm, in her impulsive fashion.

"You must not go yet awhile. You must stay and help me—as a doctor—with Philip. Promise me you won't go yet!"

One morning, about a week after this, he rode up to Mount Pleasant to see Conway professionally. Rum and sodas and unlimited Bass had affected his liver, and Dasent went to cure it, much against his will. He had scarcely hitched his pony up to the gate-post, when Maimie, with great, frightened eyes, and a white face with a strange, red mark across it, rushed out upon the verandah, followed by her husband. He had evidently been drinking; his eyes were bloodshot, and he carried a thick riding-whip in his hand. Dasent sprang up the steps, with fury in his heart.

"You brute!" he shouted, as, with a little choking sob, Maimie ran to him for protection, and clung to his arm.

"Stand back, or by Heaven I'll kill

you!" cried Conway, brandishing his whip. "I'll kill the two of you! You and that——"

Dasent shook himself free of Maimie, and dashed his fist full in the speaker's face. Conway reeled, fell, struck his head against the lintel, and lay stunned.

"He's dead!"

"Oh no, he isn't. Maimie, darling, how did this happen?" asked Dasent, losing his self-control.

"We quarrelled because I said you had forbidden him to drink, and then—— Oh, my love! my love! help me." And she fell sobbing into his arms.

"Come, Maimie, this won't do," he said, with kind roughness. "Get your hat at once, and go to Mrs. Jones. That's the only thing to be done for the present. I'll stay and look after——him."

That night Maimie slept at the Parsonage, while her husband remained a sullen invalid at Mount Pleasant.

Early the next morning Dasent was summoned by a little black boy.

"Please, sir, Mr. Conway's very sick, and old Joe thinks it is yellow fever."

There was no doubt of it. The ghastly yellow face, the delirious eyes, and the raging fever told their own tale. Dasent made a few hurried necessary arrangements in the sick-room, sent one messenger off to the chemist's, and another with a note for Maimie, telling her briefly what had occurred, and peremptorily forbidding her to come near the house.

He saw at once that it was a bad case——almost hopeless. Still, his professional pride was aroused, and he intended to combat the disease desperately. He was pouring a draught of quinine down the patient's throat; when the door opened, and Maimie came into the room.

"Go away, Maimie; go at once! I'll send you news of him," he said, rather impatiently.

Maimie took off her hat, and threw it on a chair.

"He is my husband, and I am come to nurse him."

"It's madness. You are not strong. You will be rushing into certain death."

"And you?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"It's a doctor's duty," he said.

"So it is a wife's. I am staying. Just tell me what you want done, and I'll do it."

Dasent could not gainsay her. He shrugged his shoulders again in token of reluctant submission.

Hour after hour, during that awful illness, they watched together by the sick man's bed, trying all that science and unremitting care could do to win him back to life. In his delirium he muttered things that made Dasent's blood boil, and Maimie's face grow white and set. The bruise across her cheek, where the whip had cut her, still remained. Dasent was seized with a terrible temptation to let him die there and then. It was only too easy, and it could hardly be called murder. It seemed monstrous injustice that this drunken ruffian should live to bar his way and Maimie's to happiness. What if he told her all he knew——that Conway was a fellow medical student of his; that he had swindled him out of a large sum of money; that he had turned into an idle turf-loafer, who lived upon the hard-earned salary of a provincial actress? In his delirium, Conway called his wife "Flossie," and asked her for money, and cursed her bitterly. And Maimie listened, and half guessed the miserable truth. But Dasent scarcely spoke to her, save in whispered monosyllables, giving her directions. They both sat silent, watching the man they both hated, whose death, with a terrible dread of their own selves at their hearts, they were both longing for, and yet, at the risk of their own lives, were striving to avert.

An old negro-woman, Maimie's nurse——faithful in all things, as negroes are——shared the night-watch with them.

At dawn, Dasent going out to breathe the fresh air, was surprised at seeing a strange thing hanging by the door. It was an old bottle filled with rag and straw, and from the mouth stuck three crow's feathers.

"What on earth is this?" he said aloud to himself.

"That is obeah," replied Maimie, who had crept out behind him. "Have you never heard of it? It is a spell to bring death into the house. The negroes hate him so."

When the fatal black-vomit came, Dasent muttered to himself: "It is all over."

"Not yet; there is still hope," said Maimie, in a low voice.

For two hours Conway hovered between life and death, vitality only kept in him by supreme, unrelaxing devotion. He was no longer a man in Dasent's eyes, but a case which he watched with breathless interest. At length the crisis passed, the

fever abated, and Conway fell into a calm sleep.

"We have saved his life," said Dasent, with a deep breath.

Although the worst was over, Conway required for days the most constant care that Dasent and Maimie could give him. He lay languid and exhausted, all but unconscious of their presence. And this was their hardest trial. It was comparatively easy to put self in the background during the excitement of battling with the disease; not so to continue watchful and tender now that the reaction had come. Still they came triumphantly out of the ordeal, each strengthened in love and respect for the other.

One day they were walking by the window of the sick-room, when they were startled by seeing Conway rise in bed and point terror-stricken to the door. It was the first sign of vitality he had shown.

"Who is that woman? How did she get here?"

And then a voice was heard from the hall:

"I don't care whether Mr. Conway is ill or not. Just tell him that his wife, Mrs. Conway, wishes to speak with him."

"Flossie! My wife!" cried Conway.

"Do you mean to say you married that woman you sponged on in England?" cried Dasent, fiercely.

The woman's voice outside was barely audible. Conway fell back exhausted on his pillow.

"Yes," he gasped. "The game's up. Why didn't you let me die? I think I am dying now—Maimie——"

He struggled to say more, but the words stuck in his throat. He drew two or three spasmodic breaths, and then raised himself convulsively and fell back dead. He had died of "shock."

"Ah, my dear Miss Priscilla!" said a negro woman, about two months after this, to a friend who was doing her the kindly office of plaiting her hair, as they sat at the threshold of a house. "It was the obeah as did it. White people laugh at obeah, but when you put obeah over a door something's boun' for to happen inside."

"How his wife come to find him?" inquired "Miss" Priscilla.

"Well, the Reverend say as how it war a judgement of the good God; but I think it war the obeah and the mouth that war put upon him ever sence he

came that brought his wife out to B'badoo play-acting."

"What's that, Miss Sophy?"

"Play-actin'," replied Miss Sophy, who had seen the world, "is pretendin' to be somebody else, like if you and me war to go roun' saying we war white people on a platform, and the folks all laugh."

"I see," said Miss Priscilla.

"And then obeah must have told her he was here, and so she came. Ah, my dear Miss Priscilla, he was real wicked. The debble's got him now by the foot. And now Miss Maimie's gwine to be married, and is gwine away from Turghuela, now that Mount Pleasant is to be sold. I wish we could put obeah on her and make her stay, but that's some things it won't do, my dear child. But I'll go to old Joe, and make the old nigger put up a great big obeah when Miss Maimie and Dr. Dasent get married for them to have lots of pretty chillun. Thank you, Miss Priscilla, I ain't been able to get any one to do my hair for the las' three months."

HUMOUR IN BLACK AND WHITE

A GOOD opportunity is afforded in this present season of the year—when people are beginning to flock to town, whether for the May meetings, the picture-galleries, or the theatres, or for the general purpose of seeing and being seen—to make acquaintance with the works of some of the humorous draughtsmen who have added to the gaiety of the nation during the past half-century.

First of all, there is an interesting and, conveniently, a gratis exhibition, at the great National Museum in Bloomsbury Street. Every one knows the way to the British Museum; but, once there, it is not so easy as might be expected to find the way to the exhibition gallery. Perhaps the old sphinxes, and sarcophagi, and Egyptian mummies, with Sardanapalus, Saigon, and Tiglath Pileser, may feel a little bit jealous of such a very modern and trivial affair as an exhibition of drawings and water-colours. Anyhow, the solemn temple of antiquities hangs out no banners in the way of placards or announcements; and not till the difficulties of the search are over, and the inner chamber of the maze has been almost reached, do we find the friendly direction, "To the White Gallery."

It is white, not from the colour of its decorations, nor in rivalry of the "Black and White" room at Burlington House, but from the name of the man who furnished the means of building the wing of which it forms a part. Mr. William White, who bequeathed his fortune to the Museum subject to the life-interest of his widow, died in the year 1823; but the widow survived till 1879. Fortunately, an institution like this is possessed of a considerable stock of patience; and the bequest—some sixty-five thousand pounds—was well worth waiting for. Probably we—the general "we," in which individual lives have but a limited share—shall have to wait as long again before a further stride is made in providing exhibition space for the wondrous treasures of that priceless collection of prints and drawings known as the Print Room, the full exhibition of which would be an education in itself.

Far to the east it lies, this excellent White Gallery—beyond the realms of any number of savage nations whose trophies and panoplies of peace and war adorn the long Ethnological galleries through which we must pass. Beyond the Asiatic gallery with its idols, and carvings, and rich Oriental porcelain; beyond the Ceramic saloon, where many a choice example of pottery and glass-work seems to call upon the passing visitor "to come and look at me." But if, after the example of the adventurer in search of the golden bird, the allurements by the way are resolutely declined, a turn or two brings us to the long-desired object of our search.

The exhibition abundantly repays the trouble of finding it, for, in addition to the examples for which we are looking, it contains a very interesting series of original drawings, running in date from the fifteenth century to the present time. And our own draughtsmen and water-colourists are fairly well represented, with examples of some of the most famous masters in their genre, with others to be ranked among the best, although by artists little known to fame.

But our business is only with the humorists. And it is at once evident what there were clever amateur caricaturists in the earlier days of the Georges. What of the stately historian of the Decline and Fall, whose portrait some wicked young woman—Lady Diana Beauclerc—it appears has "taken off" as a puffy, snub-nosed, porcine kind of person.

Nor has he fared better at the hands of young Walpole, "Horry's" nephew, who has caught him in a favourite attitude, with his little spindle legs dangling in front of him. Alas, the sketcher holds nothing sacred. Some day, perhaps, out of the treasures of the Print Room will be disinterred a contemporary cartoon of Shakespeare in his cups, or Milton, haggard and decrepit, like the blind beggar of Bethnal Green.

The people of the next century, which will be here a great deal sooner than anybody wants it, when they seek to realise the bodily presence of the distinguished people of preceding generations, will turn to the caricaturist of the period rather than to the National Portrait Gallery. Doubly precious then will be such scraps and jottings as are preserved in the national collection from the pencil of that master of humorous portraiture, Richard Doyle. Little bits where the artist has caught the humour of the moment on the wing; groups, such as that of Dickens, burly John Forster, and Douglas Jerrold, seized at a moment of social expansion; Gladstone on a committee, ere his fame and the historic collar had waxed great; sportsmen and statesmen in their salad days, still famous in this waning age. Here are bits, too, of John Leech's sturdy humour, and some charming studies from Randolph Caldecott's graceful pencil. We have also drawings and studies by "Phiz," whose title to rank as a humorist is chiefly derived from his association with the great humorist of the age. He is seen at his best, perhaps, in the splendid drawings that illustrate Lever's "O'Donoghue."

But leaving Bloomsbury and stepping westward as far as New Bond Street, we shall be lucky enough to find the collected drawings of an artist of considerable powers, who will be known to fame as the most faithful and graphic illustrator of the humorous side of daily life of his period. No one can have failed to appreciate, as the raciest of Mr. Punch's weekly bill of fare, the pleasant sketches signed "C. K.," which, for the last forty years, have continued to appear, without deterioration in freshness or interest. Many must have regretted that the familiar sign was to be seen no more, and to hear that the artist's life ceased, not long after his retirement from Mr. Punch's show; and yet Mr. Charles Keene was never so well known to the public as John Leech was in his time, or as

Mr. Dumouriez is now. Perhaps it was because he appealed neither to the sporting proclivities of the country party nor to the superfine "society" instincts of the town, but portrayed the common texture of everyday life without malice or exaggeration. And though Keene, perhaps, lacks the spontaneous humour of John Leech, it goes without saying that he is immeasurably his superior as an artist. Indeed, the force of black and white can hardly go further than in these examples of the artist's work. And the woodcuts that reproduced his sketches give no full impression of the power and beauty of his finished drawings. Here everything is right and every stroke tells; there is no groping and striving after effect; the figures, the backgrounds, the accessories all fall into harmonious combination, as it seems, at the will of an unfaltering and unerring hand.

It is, perhaps, in his country scenes that the artist is seen at his best. His country doctors, his farmers, his rustics, he draws them all to a hair; and as for his gallery of country parsons it extracts every variety known in his day, all as real and lifelike as they can be made. He is equally at home in a punt on the river. What can be better than the devoted, but short-sighted angler who thinks he has hooked the big jack, and calls lustily for the landing-net; or than Jarvis, the professional hand, "It's only an old frying-pan! But that will be useful when we do catch him."

The humours of the London streets, too, are Keene's, as it were, by inheritance. He is not so original here, perhaps having so many predecessors in the line. But who has surpassed his omnibus-driver — of a school now becoming extinct, for the new-fashioned omnibuses, where the driver is perched up in solitary state, have destroyed the sociability of the class. But the driver of the old school who had inherited some of the traditions of the stage-coach, and who would converse affably with his box-seat. And with him the sulky, obstinate growler, and the supercilious "hansom." Surely the force of polite sarcasm could no further go than in the address of the dashing two-wheeler to the Jarvie who has slightly collided with his rival: "'Ow d' yer like London, sir?" While Jarvie himself unconsciously scores, when in reply to the sleek parson, who wishes to be driven with all speed to Lambeth Palace, he ejaculates: "Lambra

Palace, why, it don't open till half-past eight!" As for the waiter, Mr. Keene knew "Robert" excellently well, and drew him to the life.

Then there is the street vendor also to the life, with his tray full of automaton frogs, addressing the bulky, nervous old lady, in whose idiosyncrasies the artist seems to revel. "They all on 'em jump, mum!" So did the old lady. With the bulky, indeed, euphemistically called, Keene is always great; but he is good-natured too. Their solid load of flesh is cheerfully sustained, and he allows them all the virtues of their temperament.

The real humour of the artist lies below the surface, and is often independent of the perhaps well-worn Joe Millar that forms the ostensible motive of the drawing, whose truth and vigour will preserve their savour, even when the fun of them may have grown out of date. The grocer, the cheesemonger with his little customers, the general shopkeeper of the village, the lawyer, the local quidnunc, all these will be known and appreciated by posterity, even should any of them cease to exist as distinct classes, through the drawings of Charles Keene.

The artist is also, and especially, at home in the law courts. Even the back of his leading Q.C. is eloquent; the judge on the bench, the plaintiff, defendant, witnesses, and jury are all at his command. The county magistrate's court, too, is familiar ground to him. But of the great people of the county — of the squire, and Sir Thomas, and the Marquis of Carabas, he has very little to note. Nor is he familiar with Duchesses and Countesses, and the high dames of society. His female figures are mostly of the homely, careworn, honest country sort — no more graceful than the originals, but wonderfully true to Nature. Who can forget the good old country body at her cottage door, and the sympathetic parson who condoles with her on the loss of her husband, to whom, in his illness, the rectory cows had furnished a daily can of milk? "Afore he went, sir, he left the quart o' milk to come to me daily, poor dear." Yet here and there the artist draws a pleasant, comely female face; but it is of a type that is passing away. To the young woman of the period our artist has little to say.

But of all achievements in black and white, commend us to the artist's Channel steamer. The sloppy deck, the light that is quivering on the sea, the

wind that blows in the teeth of the grizzled man at the wheel, all the conditions of sea and sky represented in flowing lines of pen and ink.

And, in taking leave of our artist, we seem to be bidding adieu to a period, of which his drawings form the most characteristic of memorials. Other times, other manners, and, let us hope, other artists as good and faithful in their work of illustrating the passing follies and fancies of the day, as Charles Keene.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "Louis Draycott," "Geoffrey Stirling," "Aunt Hepey's Foundling," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAJOR IS QUITE DECIDED.

"THE peripatetic civilian is not, however, always a success," said Charley Rowan, with a significant look at the man next him; "you remember the people who came here in a yacht—a most irreproachable yacht?"

"Yes, yes," said two or three men at once; while the Honourable Robert Dacre—commonly called the "Honourable Bob"—screwed his glass into his eye, and ejaculated:

"By—Jove!"

"Why, they nearly got asked to the Palace, don't you know?" said a washed-out-looking young man, known as "Ginger" in the regiment to which he belonged, from the generally sandy effect of combined hair and freckles.

"Ya-as," drawled the Honourable Bob, "and there'd have been a pretty kettle of fish if they had."

"Then there were those people who took a house in the Strada Stretta, don't you know?" put in Ginger again. "The Medicots got very thick with them, and met them afterwards in London;" this with an uneasy glance at a lady seated at a writing-table at the far end of the room.

"Just so," said Charley Rowan.

The group of men exchanged glances; while the Honourable Bob ejaculated a second "By Jove!" that spoke volumes.

The said group surrounded, or may said to have been gathered about, a tall, stout, peculiarly self-satisfied, not to say aggress-

sive-looking man, with a huge moustache, keen grey eyes, a hawk-like profile, and a frank, no-nonsense-about-me sort of manner that took you in thoroughly—until you knew him. After that, you looked upon Desbrow Clutterbuck, Major in the 193rd, as a painted show, a hollow sham, and all the rest of it. But the process of knowing the man was sometimes a long and painful one, and cost a good deal, both in trouble and cash.

It was current gossip that, on one occasion, a very young soldier of the R.E. came to pay a P.P.C. call at the Major's house. This young man was not without a certain share of this world's goods, and had, as the saying goes, "parted freely" at various games of chance. Said the bluff and outspoken Major:

"You've been more than welcome to the poor hospitality we have been able to offer you;" and he grasped the young man's hand in a cordial and fatherly manner.

After a glance round, to assure himself that the Major's wife was out of earshot—every man in the garrison tried his best to spare Mrs. Clutterbuck on all possible occasions—the infantile warrior gave his little Roland for an Oliver.

"I've paid for your hospitality," he said. "I've dropped a cool seven hundred since I made your acquaintance."

Any other man than the hearty Major would have been taken aback at this. But do you think he turned a hair? Not he!

"Was it so much, now?" he answered, with that suspicion of an Irish accent that those who knew him slightly found so amusing. "I didn't think it had run to the odd number. However, the fortunes of war, dear boy, the fortunes of war."

Then that young man went out into the blazing Malta sunshine, and said bad words.

This small anecdote will give us the Major's measure pretty accurately, and assist us in "placing" the dramatis personæ of our story.

Before, however, going any further, it may be well to recall the fact that we have already made some acquaintance with the 193rd Regiment of Foot, and taken some interest in that corps; and it behoves me to mention the fact that Major Desbrow Clutterbuck was a man who had "come in," and not one who had climbed the steps of promotion from en-sign upwards, and been, as it were, part

and parcel of "the regiment." During the Indian Mutiny the 193rd had suffered severely. Gaps had been wide, promotions rapid; and, in the course of events that followed, several men had come in from outside. Of these the sprightly Major was one.

When our story opens, the commanding officer, Colonel Mostyn Eliot, was away on leave; the senior Major, Lindsey by name, was in command; the time of the year was early summer; the place, Sleima—a sort of summer resort on the eastern side of the island of Malta.

Here, in a charming, villa-like residence, facing the purple sea, and clothed about with vine, and fig-tree, and the famed datura, with its snow-white trumpet-flowers, lived Major and Mrs. Clutterbuck, lovely Mabel Graham, Mrs. Clutterbuck's daughter by a former marriage, little Lily, a sprite of fourteen years old with long fair tresses loose to every wind of heaven, and a scramble of boys, twelve, ten, eight, and then "King Baby" to finish up with, a royal and autocratic monarch, *à la* four, who ruled his subjects with a rod of iron. It is pleaded for that not very pleasant animal, the grizzly bear, that it is "fond of its cuba." It might be said of Major Clutterbuck that he too was fond—very fond of his cuba. There could be no doubt of that; and it certainly was a redeeming and loveable point in the man's character. He was seen at his best with Lily by his side, and surrounded by those monsters in human form, commonly called "the boys." For monsters they were, inasmuch as no mischief possible to the young of the human species came amiss to them. But they adored their gentle, patient mother to a man—or rather to a boy, and that was indeed a light amid the gloom. In a regiment, a family ill brought up, and whose people cannot afford to send it to proper schools to be properly trained, is an awful scourge. On land it is trying; at sea it is maddening, and many were the devices of the younger officers of the 193rd, when on board a troop-ship, to decoy the young male Clutterbucks into lonely and retired spots, and then administer condign punishment to the same. It is said that you can tell a dog to be thoroughbred by his keeping silence when you hold him up by the tail. Certainly, judging from this stand-point, there was something decidedly thoroughbred about the young Clutterbucks. They never told tales, or went anivelling to their elders.

But to return to the group gathered about the Major as stars round their central sun.

"Don't forget the pretty widow who looked so well on horseback," said Ginger, stroking his canary-coloured moustache.

"And was summoned home in such a hurry to her little daughter, who was seized with scarlet fever," continued Charley Rowan, laughing heartily.

"By Jove!" put in the Honourable Bob, "poor old Gasford was aw'fuly let in there, don't you know. She'd got him to order the horse, and all the rest of it, and he had to pay the piper—by Jove!"

"No fear of this man letting in any one in that way," said the Major, with blunt decision; "he's positively made of money, as any one may see at a glance."

A studious avoidance of any interchange of looks betrayed a certain consciousness among the audience as they listened to this placidly-stated fact.

And here—lest any misunderstanding should arise in the reader's mind—it had better be said at once that there never was, at any time, the very smallest suspicion or notion of Major Clutterbuck being guilty of the "unpardonable sin"—namely, cheating at cards.

The man was a spendthrift; selfish, and extravagant; shifty in his dealings with his long-suffering wife as to debts and expenditures, but, let it be said once and for all, accused of no deeper wrong than keeping a cool head and a clear eye, and having a surpassing skill in all games of chance. Still, these were gifts that made him a dangerous friend for the newly-joined ensign with a good allowance outside his pay, or the reckless gambler who found his one excitement in life in balancing himself upon the giddy verge of ruin.

Such was Desbrow Clutterbuck, and certainly it could not be a matter of surprise that "the Regiment" did not look with exceeding favour upon the man who had "come in from outside."

No one, however, had a word to say against Mrs. Clutterbuck. To her the demeanour of the men was chivalrous and reverent, that of the women tender; while as for Mabel Graham, why, of course, every bachelor officer in the corps was more or less in love with her, the officers' wives made a pet of her, and even the surgeon-major's wife, Mrs. Masters, whose tongue was supposed to secrete the poison of asps, forbore to pick holes in her—or nearly so.

The girl was so gentle, so thoughtful for others, so forgetful of herself, so little conscious of her own beauty, her own charm, so devoted to her pale and patient mother, so loyal to the Major, such a dear, loving sister to Lily and "the boys"—who could help but love her, these things being so!

Certainly not Charley Rowan, Captain in the Rifle Brigade, who at present sat with his back to the softened light that came shimmering in through the half-closed jealous, and his eyes—such dear, true, honest eyes of liquid blue—staring eagerly and undisguisedly at the tattie that hung across the door, and might—so he thought—be pushed aside by the fairest and most helpful hand in the world.

The dark, steadfast eyes of Vernon Halkett, Surgeon—Captain Rowan's close friend and brother officer—were also, many times and oft, turned in the same direction. It was the old story—two hearts drawn to the same woman—two loving, where only one could win.

The somewhat grave, almost stern face of the young surgeon could soften to wonderful tenderness at the sight of suffering, in handling the wounded limb, or touching the fevered brow. No more perfect minister of the art of healing could be imagined than Vernon Halkett, and the tie between himself and Charley Rowan had its firmly-rooted beginning in a time when, with all a man's skill, and all a woman's tenderness, the young doctor watched by his comrade's couch through all the vicissitudes of a malignant fever. To these gifts and graces of healing Vernon Halkett added the best characteristics of a soldier: calmness, courage, and true manliness, and bore a name upon which no slightest slur had ever yet rested.

The two men in their plain, close-fitting uniforms of darkest green, were a pleasant pair to look upon, as many a bright eye testified. Never had the one said to the other that the villa by the sea was a charming spot in the scenery of the island, or compared notes as to the exquisite flavour of tea presented to them in rather ill-matched cups and saucers by—Mabel Graham. The household appointments at the Major's were decidedly scrappy—things didn't match at all, and the presence of "the boys" made itself felt on all occasions—whether they were actually there in the flesh or not. To find

a well-grown rabbit lopping about the drawing-room, or to see a sea-gull protruding its head from a basket in search of morsels of fish from the family table, was trying to the new-comer; but these, and worse things still, were endured by men in all sorts and kinds of uniform, for the sake of the gentle girl who strove so hard to keep all things smooth, and failed, when failure was inevitable, with such a patient grace. But to return to the Major.

"I have fully resolved," said the Major, with an air of indescribable candour and frank outspokenness, "that I shall call upon—er—Jones of Seething Lane."

"Is that what he calls himself?" said Captain Rowan.

"Isn't he anything Jones?" put in Vernon Halkett.

"No," said the Major; "he's just Jones."

The Honourable Bob muttered something about "the only Jones;" but no one took any notice of him. The Honourable Bob set up to be the wag of the regiment, therefore no one felt to be under the necessity of recognising his observations when a serious subject was under discussion. His bird-like profile, and the fierce moustache that emphasized it, were much admired by the gentler sex, as also was the marvellous dexterity with which he manipulated his stringless eyeglass, whipping it into his waistcoat-pocket, when it was not on duty, in such a manner as to suggest some practice as a conjurer.

"I'm glad he isn't anything Jones," said Ginger. "That widow, you know—Mrs. Mornington Smith—wasn't it? was a caution."

"No one could ever twace her," said the Honourable Bob, "and the twadesmen were left lamenting, don't you know."

An uneasy silence followed. Visions of delirious duns rushing on board troopships at the very last moment and wildly enquiring for—Well, well; the Honourable Bob never did open his mouth without putting his foot in it, as had been many times observed by his many friends.

At this moment a head like a mop was thrust through the half-open door, and Jim, the middle boy of the "scramble," appeared dragging behind him, at far too rapid a pace to be pleasant, no less a person than Master Phil—otherwise King Baby—his smood of curls all in a tangle, his bonnie face rose-red with the pace. Jim made straight for Dr. Halkett.

"We ran all the way from the bottom

of the garden when we heard you'd come," he said, looking up with bright, eager eyes into the dark, quiet face; "I say, I'm glad you're come. There's something wrong with my modal traction-engine, don't yer know." This last with a quizzical glance at the Honourable Bob, who was rubbing his chin with the head of his cane, and regarding the intruder anything but affectionately through his carefully-focussed eyeglass.

"We be's welly glad you be's come," echoed King Baby, with his hand on Halkett's knee, and his eyes lifted to his brother's face for inspiration; but the traction-engine was too big a subject to be tackled, and King Baby concluded his remarks by nestling his head against the Doctor's tunic.

As Mrs. Clutterbuck rose from her seat at the further end of the long, narrow room, the men came to their feet, and Captain Rowan rolled a low lounging-chair close to the open window.

"Sit down and talk to us a little, Mrs. Clutterbuck," he said, with a tender deference in air and voice that some young ladies in the garrison would have been very ready to envy had they seen it.

The Major's wife was tall, and still slender; in fact, she gave you the notion of a woman who had been worn away by years and years of anxiety and uncertainty. You could see she had been beautiful, and realise that she had only missed that ripe autumnal beauty that comes to happy women in middle age, because "carking care" had delved hollows beneath her sad brown eyes, and hard lines about her patient mouth. The shapely head, the graceful carriage, these she had bequeathed to her daughter Mabel, and Jim looked at you with her eyes—before they had grown so sad.

"You are very kind to want me," she said; "but I must see to these unruly ones first. Jim, Jim"—with a loving, deprecating shake of the head at that scapegrace—"you are hardly fit to come into the drawing-room; and what have you been doing to Phil?"

Alas! King Baby's pinafore was not innocent of oil—black oil, too—and he appeared to have been endeavouring to anoint his curls with the same.

"Come—see—Docky," lisped the culprit; then, big with thoughts of the broken traction-engine, looked helplessly at Jim.

Jim would doubtless have explained in his most lucid manner how matters stood, but the Major cut him short.

"Marion," he said, addressing his wife, "I wish you would not check the children in that way. I like them," he continued, turning to the Honourable Bob with engaging confidence, "I like them to have plenty of scope; I like them to be natural—to grow up like the flowers, and the er—"

"Weeds?" suggested the Honourable Bob, making a sensible observation for once in his life; "well, they do, you know—they do, ewerybody says so."

The Major hummed a tune under his breath. He wondered if that confounded ass meant to be impertinent. If he did; well, there was an I.O.U. or two in the drawer in the next room—the Major's snuggery, in fact, a room where the light in the window oft-times paled its ineffectual fires before the radiance of the rising sun.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Clutterbuck—a faint flush rising to her faded cheek at her husband's reproof—began, somewhat nervously, chatting to Captain Rowan and the Honourable Bob. She was angry with herself for still feeling acutely the snub direct, so often administered to her; angry that others should see her wince. Some women—finding marriage a failure—can arm their hearts against wounds, by ceasing to love the man who cripples and stunts their lives; but this woman was not of that calibre. Her first marriage had been a loveless union into which she had been driven by others before she knew that she had a woman's heart in her breast; in her second, the overmastering influence of a passionate attachment was the chiefest factor. That she rued the day when she first met Desbrow Clutterbuck, many of her friends took for granted; but I doubt whether this were really the case, for, maybe, she loved him better than she could have loved a better man, and found a secret consolation in the knowledge that no other woman could have been to him what she was—could have so palliated his sins, so consoled him in the day of despair. For such days did again and again come to the Major; days in which he would tell his long-suffering wife that nothing remained but to blow his brains out—those brains that had served him so ill, and deserved to be brought to a bad end—or to fly regiment and country and turn squatter in the wilds of Queensland. A lucky night's play, the sudden news of a successful horse, well backed, and the shadows would pass. If he went

down like a stone, he rose like a cork. He might have laid his head on that faithful breast, and wept tears of fear and repentance, in the evening, might have told her that the arms that clasped him so fondly were his only earthly refuge, and, by the morning, been whistling about the house or carolling gay songs in a wonderfully tuneful tenor, the boys listening in rapt delight, and Lily whirling round to the sweet refrain, with her cloud of hair floating out behind her.

Never was such a household of ups and downs as the Major's!

Many and many a secret of its inner life was there known only to "dear old Musters," "Good old Musters," as the fellows were apt to call the Surgeon-Major of the 193rd; not one of which secrets did he ever impart to the wife of his bosom, though she made never such a corkscrew of herself, and laid never so many traps and pits for his unwary moments.

"I know no more than you do," she would say to a curious acquaintance, "whatever I may suspect."

Indeed "old Musters" took good care of that, and Mrs. Clutterbuck had no better or more valued friend.

It had been said by certain unfriendly spirits that whenever this crushed-looking woman appeared at any regimental or garrison festivity, people made "a ridiculous fuss over her." And perhaps there was some truth in this. Nothing appeals to your true soldier like weakness and helplessness. I have oftentimes witnessed this grand and noble spirit of chivalry in men of the calibre of Rowan, Halkett, and even the Honourable Bob. I have seen a poor, down-trodden, timid, entirely unattractive woman singled out for care and kindness; and a thousand petits soins make a passing brightness in her still, grey life, and bring the dew of ready tears of grateful surprise into her weary eyes.

It was easy to see that on the part of Captain Rowan a strong personal regard existed towards poor Mrs. Clutterbuck; in fact, there was some close bond between the two, some friendly understanding, of which the signs were plain enough to read. As now, when, after a look—wistful on the man's side, sympathetic on hers—Mrs. Clutterbuck said, softly:

"She is out riding, with Mrs. Crashleigh."

The personal pronoun, used as a substi-

tute for any proper name, spoke volumes. But something was kept back, for again a faint rose-flush dyed Mrs. Clutterbuck's cheek.

"You mean Mabel?" shouted Jim—as usual, in his mother's pocket.

And King Baby—most faithful of echoes—cried in his shrill little piping voice:

"'Oo means Mabel, dear Mabel. Her be's gone on a gee-gee, wis—wis——" But here baby ran amuck.

This time it was in Charley Rowan's cheek that the hot colour rose.

There are few things more unpleasant than for some one to make an observation to you sotto voce, and some one else to shriek it out in the ear of the general public.

"My daughter," said the Major, with an ineffable air, and a graceful gesture of his finely-formed hand that was only too familiar to his wife, "has gone out riding with Sir Peyton Paling—kindly chaperoned by our good friend Mrs. Crashleigh——"

Then Charley Rowan understood the flush on Mrs. Clutterbuck's face when she told him that Mabel was out. Sir Peyton Paling—commonly known in the garrison as "the bibulous Baronet," was one of the Major's intimates—well connected, well off, a man who, in spite of his failings, was looked upon as a decided parti. Tall, intended by nature to be stalwart and athletic, Sir Peyton stooped in the shoulders so as to cut a somewhat unsoldierly figure in the saddle on parade; his mouth was loose-lipped, and tremulous, his eyes oftentimes heavy, his hand by no means to be depended upon. It was not that the man was ever, or at all events, often, what might be called drunk; but, he began nipping as early as nine a.m., and kept on at the same until towards daylight, regularly spending many long hours at the card-table. His skill as a player was not great; his conceit enormous, and he was an ardent admirer of the beau sexe. Can it not well be imagined that he was a valuable acquaintance to Major Clutterbuck, and that that gentleman, finding in him a truly congenial spirit, would revel in the idea of him in the possible light of a titled and wealthy son-in-law?

"Do you like Mrs. Crashleigh? Do you think she's nice?" cried Master Jim, his legs planted well apart, his big eyes looking fixedly at Rowan as if determined to wring the truth out of him. "I don't. I think she's downright nasty—the lot of us think so——"

"We tink so," put in King Baby,

clutching Halkett's hand to steady himself properly, and determined to have a share in the conversation.

"Do you know what she did?" went on Jim, while every one trembled in their shoes, that young gentleman's utterances being occasionally of the most imprudent description; "she came here to call; we were in the balcony over the door. She didn't see us because of the vine-leaves, you know. 'I hope those horrid brats aren't at home,' says she. Yes, she did, we heard her." This in answer to a polite look of incredulity which Halkett and the Honourable Bob had managed to call up. "Horrid brats, that's what she said, so I stuck my head out. Bertie was afraid; but I wasn't. She's only a woman after all, isn't she, and women can't do one much harm, can they?" Here an imbecile smile and a murmur from the Honourable Bob had to be ignored by the rest. "Well, I stuck my head out, and I said, 'Oh, yes, we are at home, every one of us; just you come in and see if we aren't.'"

"Then you were very rude, Jim, as I fear you often are," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, hurriedly.

"But I say, mother," persisted Jim, "do you like Mrs. Crashleigh? I'm sure Mabel doesn't. You know she almost cried when pa told her that she was to ride Sir Peyton's grey, and go out with—— I'm sure if she'd known you were coming," said this wretched Jim, with a plunge at Captain Rowan and a great glad smile that nobody returned, "she'd have stayed at home. I think she's always glad when you come to see us."

"Tum to see us," echoed King Baby; and then a dreadful silence fell on everybody. Nor did the Major look as if he thought "more scope" was needed by his offspring.

He moved hastily towards the window, humming under his breath "In the merry,

merry month of May, As it fell upon a day," and everybody was deeply grateful to the Honourable Bob for a "By Jove!" so emphatic as to call for general and prompt attention. Well might any one ejaculate anything. Well might the gods of the olden time be invoked and appealed to.

There he was, no less a person than "Jones of Seething Lane, waddling slowly past the house on a tall steed of chestnut, dressed so, what Vernon Halkett called "emphatically," armed at all points in so unexceptionable a manner that the eye that regarded him blinked again.

He brought quite a whiff of Bond Street with him; and the men, leaning towards the half-opened jalousie, felt that his tall, shining "topper" suggested inevitable coup-de-soleil. His natty boots, white spats, lavender kid gloves, his curiously-cut coat—something of a compromise between a "frock" and a mufti "dress"—were amazing.

Mr. Jones was about the middle height, and stoutish in build. He had a fair, honest-looking face, with iron-grey hair brushed forward over each ear, and square across the forehead. They could see all this well, for, just as he passed, he took off his hat to wipe his brow with a bandana handkerchief.

"As well he may!" said Captain Rowan. "Wh—eu—fancy such a get-up in a climate like this!"

"I think," said the Major, oracularly, "that he bears trustworthiness and respectability written on every feature of his face. I have quite decided to call upon him this evening."

"I dare say he is a thoroughly good fellow," said Rowan, uneasily; "but I must say he looks like a dreadful outsider."

"Dwefdul!" echoed the Honourable Bob.

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A Weekly Journal

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CHARLES DICKENS.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

CROSS CURRENTS.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VI.

EVERY one was very much and very unreasonably surprised that Selma should not have known her cousin when he came to her rescue in the wood. As she had been only five years old when he left England, and he had sent home no photographs, recognition might nearly as well have been expected of little Elsie, even if they had been familiar playfellows before his departure. And as a matter of fact, even in her babyhood, Selma had never seen Roger Cornish.

They were sitting in the garden on the morning after Roger's arrival, when this discovery was made—Mrs. Cornish, with her colonist son on the grass at her feet, Helen, Selma, Humphrey, and a selection of the boys; the latter were anxious as to their new brother's capacity for larks—from which point of view Humphrey was eminently unsatisfactory—and were at present at that stage of their investigation which consisted in monosyllabic responses to his advances, and in hovering about on the outskirts of their elders' conversation to devour the unconscious candidate for their approbation with eyes and ears.

As far as the evidence of their eyes went, youthful popular opinion had decided that Roger looked "jolly," and, as far as it went, popular opinion was right. Roger Cornish was a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, with bright brown hair, which, short as he kept it, insisted on curling defiantly, a

full beard, a little lighter in colour, and well-opened blue eyes. There was a great deal of energy and steady reliability about his face, but very little trace of thought in the abstract, and the good-natured eyes were as simple and direct in their gaze as a child's. There was a breadth about his figure, and a depth in his voice which made him seem older than his twenty-six years, and which curiously contradicted his eyes and his boyish laugh.

The little group, with the exception of this investigating contingent which fluctuated as curiosity and restlessness dictated, had been established under the fine old trees which were one of the chief attractions of the Manor House garden, ever since breakfast, and there was that half-tentative, half-familiar air about it which always pervades such a family reunion. The new Roger was a stranger to his brother and sister, a stranger almost to his mother, and they were strangers to him. The common interests which are the bonds of family life had all to grow up between them; and in the instinctive mutual consciousness of this, the mutual desire to hasten the process, there had hardly been a pause in the quick, interested fire of question and answer.

More than an hour had passed in this way, when, after the first short silence, Mrs. Cornish said, with a smile:

"Of course it is absurd to expect that Selma should have known you, and yet I can't help feeling quite aggrieved that she did not. I don't like to think that you were so near me, dear boy, and that I didn't know it. Why didn't you come straight to me when you knew who she was?"

Roger's sunburnt face reddened, and he glanced furtively in Selma's direction.

"I—I did think of it," he said. "I knew when I heard—the name. But I—there was something—I thought I'd come on here, you see."

"You see the consequences of sending home no photographs," said Sylvia, laughing. "You've let us clamour for one all in vain, and so your own cousin doesn't know you when she sees you. And your own sister wouldn't have known you any better," she continued, suspending her needlework to look critically at him; "though, of course, I was quite a big girl—much older than Selma—when you went away. Suppose we had refused to believe in you, Roger. Suppose we had none of us known you!"

"I should have known him anywhere," interposed his mother, softly, pausing an instant in her knitting to lay her hand on his head.

"What a strange thing it was that you should have taken that short cut through the wood instead of keeping to the road!" went on his sister. Sylvia stood rather alone in the Cornish family, for the brother who should have belonged to her especially had died in his babyhood; she had always hoped that Roger, when he should come home, would take the vacant place; and she was full of eagerness to make friends with him. "I suppose you are so used to finding tracks—isn't that the word!—that the absence of a road is nothing to you. It was lucky for you, Selma, wasn't it?"

The response was so low as to be hardly audible. Selma was apparently interested at the moment in something far away on the horizon. But Sylvia hardly paused for an answer before she continued, reflectively:

"When did Selma see you last, I wonder, Roger? After all, she can only have been a tiny child when you went away. Do you remember him that Christmas before he went, Selma?"

Selma was sitting in a big basket-chair which stood, in consequence of the way in which the shade was thrown, at a little distance from the group which she faced; she was leaning back in it doing nothing, though both Helen and Sylvia had needlework in their hands. Selma very rarely did do anything when she was not working hard at her own profession. There was something rather constrained and shy about her attitude; she had hardly contributed a word to the talk which had been going on so briskly, and, as every one

turned to her with sudden curiosity as Sylvia spoke, she stretched up one arm and pulled a chestnut leaf from the tree above her head, apparently that she might pull it to pieces as she said, in a low, embarrassed voice:

"No, Sylvia, I don't remember—Roger at all."

She glanced up shyly as she spoke, and found that Roger had taken advantage of Sylvia's question to turn eagerly towards her, and that he was exactly facing her. It was the first time their eyes had met that morning, and as Selma dropped hers hastily Sylvia, who happened to be looking at her, suddenly upset her work-basket with an irrepressible movement of astonishment, and became temporarily speechless. It was Helen who lifted her head from her work, and said:

"I wonder whether you ever did see him! Do you know, auntie, I believe, after all, she never did. It was the year before Roger went away that mother and father went to Cannes, when I came to you, and Selma went with them, and before that——"

"Before that, Roger never spent his holidays in London," went on her aunt. "You're quite right, Helen. What a curious thing! Then they really did meet for the first time yesterday. I suppose you would have known Selma from her photographs, Roger, and Helen too?"

"Helen, I think I should have known," he said instantly, looking up at her frankly, "but—Selma," he turned hesitatingly as he spoke, and there was a nervous, involuntary movement from the basket-chair, "I—I didn't know her till Elsie said—till I heard her name," he finished hurriedly and incoherently.

An irrepressible chuckle from a cross-legged boy—it was Jim, the sandiest and most mischievous of the two sandy-haired ones—interrupted the conversation at this stage of the proceedings.

"What a lark!" he said, turning suddenly head over heels in his delight. "Oh, what a lark! Fancy Selma's saying you weren't real when you were her own cousin! She said she'd take you——" But Jim was abruptly interrupted; Sylvia, Humphrey, and Selma rose suddenly and simultaneously.

"Boys, don't you want to go fishing?" "Boys, go and get some lunch"; came from the two former at one and the same moment, and when the tumult which followed these suggestions had subsided,

and the boys had departed to carry both into effect, the big basket-chair under the chestnut-tree was empty.

Selma was seen very little and heard still less for the rest of the day; and, during the week that followed, the usual Selma, bright, impulsive, always, unconsciously to herself, the centre figure wherever she might be, seemed to have disappeared more completely each time Selma's outward personality was seen; the present Selma had nothing to say, had very pink cheeks in public, and very white ones in private, had large eyes which were alternately scared and dreamy; she was very anxious to be unobtrusively and incessantly useful to Mrs. Cornish or the girls, or to amuse little Elsie for hours together in private haunts of their own. Only one person noticed these things. Helen was absorbed in Humphrey, Mrs. Cornish was absorbed in Roger—whom she found by no means so even in his spirits as she could have wished, and who seemed to her to be too much given to long fits of abstraction. Only Sylvia saw, and understood, and she could hardly believe the evidence of her senses.

She was standing alone in the drawing-room one evening, when Roger had been home rather more than a week, staring blankly at the door. It had just closed behind Selma, who had vanished from the room with suddenly flushed cheeks, as a man's voice was heard from the room on the other side of the hall; and Sylvia's amazement had not allowed her to move when she was startled out of her petrification by the abrupt reopening of the door, and the precipitate entrance of Nettie, who shut it behind her with a jerk, and nearly fell back against it, with round, excited eyes.

"Sylvia," she whispered, excitedly, "what do you think?"

"I can't think," returned her sister, limply.

"I came out of the breakfast-room just this minute, and Roger came out of the dining-room and he didn't see me. Selma was simply flying upstairs, and she had dropped her handkerchief in the hall; and Roger saw it, and he saw her, and he picked it up, and he—oh, Sylvia—he—kissed it like anything."

A curious sound, suggestive of a youthful animal of some description in strong convulsions, came suddenly from under the low drawing-room window; but neither girl noticed it. Sylvia had dropped into

a chair, and was gazing at her sister as if the plump, good-natured Nettie were a spectre.

"Nettie!" she gasped at last, "it'll happen!"

"Oh, Sylvia—what?"

"Roger and Selma. Yes, you may well look like that, Nettie, but—she does!"

Lucidity in Sylvia's statements had been conspicuous so far entirely by its absence; but Nettie seemed to understand her.

"Roger and Selma!" she gasped, in a whisper, which was almost awestruck, as her round brown eyes grew rounder than ever. "Selma!"

"Nettie, my head has been going like this," said Sylvia, solemnly, making a wild agitation with her hands, intended to deplet excessive confusion of mind. "I saw him look at her the very first morning, and she met his eyes unexpectedly, and she looked——! If it had been any other girl, I should have said she meant to flirt with him; but it was Selma—Selma, Nettie! I never saw her look at any man as though he were a bit different to a girl."

"But she hasn't flirted with him," said Nettie, incomprehendingly. "She hardly ever speaks to him."

"That's it," cried Sylvia, vigorously and inconsequently. "Oh, Nettie, how stupid you are! Don't you see that Selma simply can't flirt! She—Nettie, she's fallen in love with him!"

"Sylvia!"

How long they would have sat there staring at one another, as though the world had suddenly turned upside down before their astonished eyes, it is impossible to say. The convulsive sounds outside the window, which had been apparently forcibly restrained during their conversation by the sufferer, were to be repressed no longer, and Nettie and Sylvia started instantaneously to their feet as Jim's freckled face, red and shiny with laughter, appeared suddenly above the window-sill, while the rest of his person danced with joy below.

"Selma's young man!" he said. "Oh, what a game! I'll ask him if he knows where Selma's handkerchief is. Oh, hurroo!"

The Cornish boys had been very early initiated into the inimitable field of mischief provided by what they called "spoons." During the engagement of their eldest sister—who had married some

years before, and had gone to India with her husband—they had been used as tools at very tender ages by her husband's brother, a feather-brained medical student, with an unlimited capacity for practical joking. His promptings had fallen upon truly faithful soil, especially in the case of Jim, whose perceptions as to the means by which it was possible to cover an engaged couple with confusion had been abnormally acute when he was an imp of only five. He had rejoiced greatly over the news of Humphrey's engagement, but Humphrey and Helen had turned out, as he expressed it, "no go," and he was consequently quite at liberty to concentrate his undivided attention on the possibility suggested by the conversation he had just overheard.

Sylvia and Nettie expressed their appreciation of the position by a simultaneous dash towards the window, and a clutch at the hopping, dancing figure below.

"Jim, you dreadfully wicked boy," cried Sylvia, wrathfully, but low, lest other wicked boys should appear upon the scene and complicate her difficulties. "Don't you know that it's simply disgustingly mean to listen to people?"

"People shouldn't talk so loud when a person is catching moths under the window, then. Ah, I've caught a moth, and no mistake;" and Jim winked wickedly into his sisters' perturbed countenances.

"Jim, if you do anything, I'll—I don't know what I won't do!"

"Do anything, Sylvia," was the answer, in a tone of innocence which would have shamed the proverbial new-born babe. "Me! Why, whatever should I do?"

"Oh, you imp," breathed Nettie, emulating her sister in caution and exceeding her in vigour; "there isn't any knowing what you won't do! You'll be everywhere you're not wanted!"

"I shall be about, Nettie," returned the innocent, much surprised. "A chap may be about, I suppose. Praps I shall see Roger sometimes when he doesn't see me. He's got such a spooney—I mean mooney—way with him"—with an irrepressible chuckle. "I shall look after Selma a bit, too, praps—quietly, you know. She's rather down, isn't she?" and with another irrepressible chuckle he wriggled out of his sisters' hands and disappeared in the dark.

There was nothing to be done, the much-perturbed Sylvia and Nettie argued, except to keep a sharp look-out upon the boy, and frustrate as far as possible any little plans

he might develop. To this argument each girl added a private mental determination which each thought it better not to confide to the other, and which began to take effect on the family atmosphere the very next day. Both Sylvia and Nettie apparently woke up the next morning afflicted with a curious form of restlessness, which was always urging them to call to its relief any member of the family who happened to be talking at the moment to Roger or Selma, who were always finding themselves left alone. Not alone together. It was another peculiarity of the family atmosphere, which was rather complicated in those days, that whenever there was the remotest prospect of such a contingency, either Roger or Selma incontinently fled. An incessant game of post seemed to be in progress. Selma, when her companion had departed, remonstrating, to answer Sylvia's urgent appeal, would invariably rise precipitately as soon as she found herself alone and attach herself to somebody else; whereupon, before many minutes had elapsed, that somebody's presence would become absolutely necessary to Nettie's peace of mind, and the proceedings would recommence. Roger, left alone, would stare vacantly into space for a few minutes, heave a heavy sigh, and depart to take a solitary walk.

At last, one hot afternoon in August, the whole party had taken refuge from the sun in and about a picturesque old summer-house which stood close to a large fish-pond, which gave that part of the garden a quaint, old-world look. It was some way from the house, at the extreme end of what went by the name of the lower garden, and the water, shaded by a large walnut-tree which overhung it, looked cool and refreshing on that broiling afternoon.

The younger Cornishes had gradually grown tired of inaction, and had strayed away. Sylvia and Nettie had risen one after the other in a casual manner and departed, and shortly afterwards Sylvia had suddenly remembered that she wanted Humphrey to advise her as to a piece of art needlework on which she was engaged, and had fetched him into the house, and Nettie had called for Helen on important business. Mrs. Cornish, Selma, and Roger were left alone; Selma sitting right inside the summer-house, on one of the picturesque rustic benches with which it was furnished, Mrs. Cornish just outside in a garden-chair, with Roger beside her on the slightly raised threshold.

They were not a conversational trio. Selma had a book in her hand, Mrs. Cornish was turning the heel of her sock, and Roger was staring at vacancy in a manner which was eminently self-conscious but not entertaining.

"Twenty, twenty-two, twenty-four," murmured Mrs. Cornish. "Oh, dear, that's the end of my wool; I must get some more. No, my dear, don't trouble; I don't know exactly where it is," she added, to Selma, whose absorbing interest in her book had not prevented her jumping up, almost before Mrs. Cornish had finished speaking, with a pressing offer to be allowed to go for what she wanted.

"I can look for it, auntie," she protested.

"No, no, my dear. I will go myself. Sylvia said she wanted to show me something about her work. You stop here with Roger. I shall be back directly." And Mrs. Cornish moved briskly away.

Selma hesitated a moment as if in doubt whether or no to insist on following her, and, before she had decided, Mrs. Cornish had turned the corner, and was out of sight, leaving Selma standing in the middle of the summer-house with Roger, who had risen, standing rather awkwardly in the doorway, so that if she decided to go she would have to ask him to let her pass. The colour came and went; she turned the book she held nervously in her hands, and then she suddenly sat down again, apparently choosing the least of two evils. Roger's state of mind did not seem to be much more composed than her own, and he leant his broad shoulders against one of the supports of the little place in an attitude which was far from appearing as easy as he fondly hoped.

"I—I was afraid you meant to go in," he said.

"Oh, no!"

"You—you do go in a good deal, don't you? I mean," he amended, hastily, "you generally go where I'm not."

Selma started to her feet.

"Oh, no; not at all," she said, breathlessly. "It isn't that at all; but I must go in now, I've just remembered."

She stood before him waiting for him to move, a startled figure, quiveringly anxious to escape, and he was stepping back with a heavy shade of disappointment on his honest face, when he was suddenly startled by a heavy splash and a frightened cry which Selma echoed with a shriek of dismay as her eyes suddenly dilated, and her face turned white with fright.

"The pond!" she cried. "Oh, I always knew they would. He's tumbled in. Oh, come! There are holes!" and the next moment she had rushed to the edge of the fish-pond followed closely by Roger, who asked rapidly:

"Can't they swim? Which is it?"

"Oh, yes," she cried, "but he fell off the tree! Oh, you see he doesn't rise."

Almost before the words were uttered, Roger had stripped off his coat and had plunged into the pond, on the surface of which nothing was to be seen but large, slowly-widening rings of water. He dived straight out of sight, and as the water closed above him a little strangled gasp parted Selma's white lips, and she stood rooted to the ground, not attempting to run for help or even to call out, staring with dark, dilated eyes at the spot where he had disappeared, until, a few seconds later, he rose again some distance across the pond holding a sandy, unconscious head above water with one hand as he kept himself afloat with the other.

"He's stunned," he called, speaking in short, laboured gasps, "and—heavy. Can you—help—up—the bank?"

The pond had been cleared out only a day or two before, and the bank shelved steeply down with no weeds or water-plants to serve as a hold; it rose nearly three feet above the water, and Roger could neither throw the boy up nor could he lift himself out of the water with his heavy burden in his arms.

"The tree!" he called again to Selma.

"Hold on—to the tree."

A strong, low-growing branch of the walnut-tree reached nearly to the water's edge, and catching his meaning instantly, Selma knotted her handkerchief round it to give herself a hold, and clinging to it with one hand let herself half-way down the bank, stretching out the other hand to Roger. He caught it in a strong, firm grip—the bank crumbled, broke away, the branch creaked, the slender figure awayed and strained, and then Roger stood beside her on the grass with an inanimate little heap of dripping blue serge at their feet—the unfortunate and too enquiring Jim, whose investigations into the proceedings in the summer-house from an observatory in the walnut-tree had nearly landed him in a watery grave!

"You're not hurt?" said Roger, breathlessly, as Selma sank on her knees by the boy, almost as white as he, and trembling from head to foot.

She lifted her face to him instantly, as if the common sense of struggle and danger had swept away all self-consciousness from both, and said :

"No, oh, no! You have not hurt yourself! Oh, we must take him in! My poor little Jim!"

She bent over the dripping little figure again as she spoke, and Roger, coming hastily round to the other side, gathered it very tenderly into his arms.

"Poor little chap!" he said. "Did he fall off the tree? I wish he'd come to!"

They carried him into the house, walking quickly side by side, as they had not walked since their first meeting in the wood, their faces turned to one another in a common anxiety and a common interest.

Nearly two hours passed; everything was done that could be done, and the mischievous face remained still and quiet, as it had never been seen before except when Jim was asleep. At last, however, when his mother was bending over him, all her resources exhausted, and nothing left her but to wait for the arrival of the doctor, the freckled features quivered, the deadly pallor changed, and the eyes suddenly opened.

"You can see first-rate from that branch," said a little, thin ghost of a voice; "but it's awfully crocky."

Ten minutes later Selma ran downstairs into the hall, where Nettie was trying to comfort groups of frightened, awe-struck boys.

"He's better!" she cried. "He's all right. Nettie, auntie wants you."

Nettie tore upstairs, the boys dashed out into the garden with a wild whoop of relief, and Selma was left alone. She stood still a moment, the flush of excitement with which she had told her good news fading gradually from her face, and leaving it very white as she leant back against the oak balusters for support. Then she raised herself with a little sigh of physical fatigue, and moved towards a little door which led into the quiet, old-fashioned rose-garden. At the same moment the front-door opened, and Roger came in. He stopped short as he saw her.

"Is there any change?" he asked, quickly. "Humphrey will be back directly." Humphrey had gone for the doctor.

Selma stood quite still, looking towards him just as she had turned on the opening of the door.

"He is better," she said, softly. "I do not think he is hurt at all. You have saved him."

He took two rapid steps and stood beside her, looking down into her face with eyes which she did not meet, though she did not turn her face from him.

"Not I," he said, in a tone which was the oddest mixture of diffidence and assertion; "I could have done nothing without your help. You saved us both."

She made a slight swift gesture of denial, and there was one moment's pause. But neither seemed embarrassed. The barrier broken down in that moment when their hands had touched in that desperate, straining clutch, was not to be re-erected. At last he said, very diffidently, but not awkwardly :

"Are you sure you are not hurt? You look tired."

"Only tired," she said, lifting a pair of unconsciously pathetic eyes to his face. "My wrist is a little strained, that is all."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, and then he pulled himself up as she flushed faintly at his tone, and turned involuntarily towards the garden door. "Were you going into the garden?" he said. "May I—may I come too?"

Selma did not raise her eyes, and the flush on her tired face deepened as she answered, very softly :

"If you like."

THE CHANTREY BEQUEST.

THERE is much talk at the present time of a National Gallery of British Art, and great impetus has been given to the subject by Mr. Henry Tate's princely offer to build a gallery for such a collection; yet this talk, which is generally supposed to have been but lately sprung, is not merely of to-day. It first took shape some fifty years ago, when, upon the death of Sir Francis Chantrey, the famous sculptor, it was found that he had left his large fortune, or rather the reversion of it upon his wife's death, in trust to the President and Council of the Royal Academy of Arts, in order that they might apply the income to the encouragement of English Art.

Now it is popularly supposed that this bequest was intended for the encouragement of rising talent; but, according to Sir Francis Chantrey's will, nothing was farther from his intention, except in the general

sense, that when Art is encouraged, then it naturally follows that rising talent is also encouraged. The terms of the will are that the money is to be applied to the encouragement of the Fine Arts by the purchase of either pictures or sculpture which have been wholly executed in England, with a view to forming a representative collection of English Art. The works are to be bought for their intrinsic merit only, nor is a sympathetic feeling for any artist to in any way influence the decision of the President and Council, who are to pay a liberal price, which is to be left to their discretion. The money is not to be applied to the building of a gallery, which, as the will suggests, might be found by the Government. There is no stipulation that the pictures are to be selected from the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy, nor is there a word about encouraging rising talent. There is a direct stipulation that no commissions are to be given, and also that the works of English or foreign artists may be bought, so long as such works have been executed in England. The income need not be spent in any particular year; but may be allowed to accumulate for five years.

Thus it will be seen that the President and Council of the Royal Academy have a very free hand. Their judgment is uncontrolled, the amount of money at their disposal is large—the legacy is reported to amount to one hundred and fifty thousand pounds—in short, nearly every possible facility is in their power to enable them to form a representative collection of works of art.

It is to be regretted that the Court of Chancery did not see its way to give still further facilities by granting the application which was made a year or two ago by the President and Council, to the effect that they might be allowed to purchase a work of sculpture in the plaster, and have it copied into marble or bronze. The Court, however, took the view that this would be giving a commission—a veritable red-tape decision; for a little more attention to common-sense, and less attention to law, would possibly have enabled the Judges to see that the work of art is finished to all intents and purposes when it leaves the modeller's hands, and that any future process is merely for preservation, be it a casting in bronze or carving in marble.

The result of this decision has been to tie the hands of the President and Council

in some degree with regard to sculpture. Another manner in which they have managed to hamper their freedom of choice, is that in always making their purchases from the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy, and never coming to a decision until after the exhibition has been open for some time, they lose the chance of securing the best works of art, which are either generally sold before leaving the studios, or else are eagerly snapped up at the private view.

It might be thought that the trustees of such an important fund could visit the studios in order to secure the first refusal of promising pictures, or that they might make their decisions before the private view; for of course it is generally the best pictures which are sold, although in the case of good pictures by young men who are comparatively unknown, the trustees have been able to secure several, and have, moreover, done an immeasurable service to Art in so doing. Take the case of a young man who paints a fine picture; he is unknown to the public, who buy pictures by name, and not generally for their artistic merit; he is unknown to the dealers, who only buy what they can sell to a guileless public at an enormous profit; he has possibly spent all his substance in the production of this picture, and should he fail to sell it, the consequences for him would be serious, for not only would he find himself out of pocket, but he also, having produced a fine work of art which he cannot dispose of, becomes discouraged, and will most probably devote his attention to the painting of pictures more of the catch-penny class. At this important moment of his career, the fact that there is a possibility of his work being purchased by the trustees of the Chantrey fund is of great value; for if the matter were left to the popular judgement, the young painter of a really fine picture would have but a sorry chance of after success. There might be pointed out two or three such instances in the collection which finds a temporary home in South Kensington—the word temporary is used because it is devoutly hoped that all these pictures may find a final resting-place in Mr. Tate's new gallery, that is, if red-tape officialism will allow it to become an actual fact. There will be plenty of pictures ready to put into it, even if the donor does not include his own fine collection.

As if to intimate that there was no stipulation that works must be purchased

out of the annual exhibition at Burlington House, amongst the first pictures purchased by the trustees of the fund was a large picture by a deceased artist, W. Hilton, entitled "Christ Crowned with Thorns." It is of the species which the French call "machines," of which occasional specimens are now seen in the Royal Academy, in which the figures must of necessity be larger than life-size, or what is termed heroic. It was a favourite form of picture in past generations, and proceeded from the hands of such painters as Copley, Opie, Northcote, and Hilton. The last of these was, however, the greater artist. His works are well composed, and well drawn; but they are fast disappearing under the ravages which time works with bad pigments. Some of his works in Liverpool have cracked beyond recovery; and this one is well on the downward path.

It hardly appears clear in what manner the purchase of this picture could be called an encouragement of the Fine Arts, which, it may be taken, would mean rather the encouragement of living artists to maintain a high ideal and restrain them from sinking to vulgarity and mediocrity in their search after popularity. Again, if the money is to be expended on the purchase of works by deceased Masters, are there not many more whose works are rather to be sought after than those of Hilton? It is only necessary to mention Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilkie, Turner, and Constable. This picture, however, is the only one by a deceased painter which has been purchased; so it is just possible that the trustees have arrived at the conclusion that in so doing they were not exactly carrying out the terms of the will.

The widow of Sir Francis Chantrey did not die till 1875, surviving her munificent husband thirty-four years, so that the money bequeathed did not become available till that time. In 1877 the first purchases were made, and consisted of "Christ Crowned with Thorns," by W. Hilton, R.A., a piece of sculpture by Sir Frederic Leighton, P.R.A.—"An Athlete Wrestling with a Python"—and six other pictures, including "Harmony," by Frank Dicksee, A.R.A., and "Amy Robsart," by W. F. Yeames, R.A.

Sir Frederic Leighton's bronze is a fine, vigorous piece of work, and certainly worthy of a place in a national collection. As much cannot be said for Mr. Yeames's

"Amy Robsart," which is very commonplace, although there is some beauty in the fallen figure of the heroine; but this is spoilt by the rather inferior draping of the robe. This picture, like so many others in this collection, seems to have gone very dull. Mr. Frank Dicksee's "Harmony," which was the forerunner of the Æsthetic craze which caused such amusement about ten years ago, is, in spite of a certain weak sentimentality, a good picture. Most people will remember the great success which it achieved on its first appearance fourteen years ago. Admiring ladies would stand in front and take mental notes of the dress of the girl seated at the organ, and mark the manner in which her hair is done, and then go away and do likewise, with fearful results; youths who felt a longing and a desire to be mistaken for persons of culture, would posture as does the youth in this picture; and, moreover, it became a necessary part of the cult that the disciples of this new mediæval æstheticism should wear upon their faces the look of intensity which marks the countenances of the figures in "Harmony," and which Mr. Punch called "yearning."

It is difficult to see what is the particular artistic merit of two of the pictures purchased in this year. "A Tidal River," by Joseph Knight, is a very dull and dirty piece of painting, and an uninteresting subject; but its badness is as a mere nothing compared to the work entitled "Early Promise," by Joseph Clarke; this is of the kind facetiously styled by Mr. Whistler "British"; possibly this was what recommended it. It is to be hoped that not much money was spent on it. "The Story of Ruth," by T. M. Rooka, is a rather unsatisfactory work of the Burne-Jones school. If the President and Council wished to purchase—as they certainly should—a work of this school, would it not have been more in accordance with the terms of the will if they had bought one of Mr. Burne-Jones's own pictures, and not the work of one of his pupils? "Digging for Bait," by C. W. Wylie, is a picture of some interest—a nice clever piece of painting, but hardly of sufficient importance to claim a place in a representative gallery. Undoubtedly, in the first year, the trustees purchased too many works. There was possibly an accumulation of funds; but they might have omitted at least three of their purchases. The collection is growing in size,

and attaining an importance which will not be increased by the presence of a large quantity of inferior and commonplace work.

In the following year, 1878, the only work purchased was the beautiful "Psyche" of G. F. Watts, R.A. This picture has been for some time in Dublin, consequently it cannot be more than referred to here. Purchases of this class are certainly more in accordance with the founder's design. There need, however, be no fear of Mr. Watts being inadequately represented in any English national collection of the future, for he has with great generosity presented many of his finest works to the nation, some of which are now hung in another part of the Museum.

In 1879 the best work purchased was "The Waning of the Year," by Ernest Parton, one of the finest landscapes in the collection. Its production seems to have been too much for the artist, who has done nothing of any interest since, but its influence on contemporary landscape art was very great; the Academy was flooded for years after with silver birches standing beside silver pools, and even now some artists have not lost the infection. This the first was undoubtedly the best rendering of the subject. "Toil and Pleasure," by J. R. Reid, when hanging on the walls of the Academy, was a very fresh and powerful picture. Now, even in these few years, it has lost its bright colour and has gone very black. The use of fugitive pigments seems to be the besetting sin of English artists from the time of Reynolds down to the present day. A very pathetic picture, "Their only Harvest," by Colin Hunter, A.R.A., is spoilt by the coarseness of the technique. In his anxiety to be forcible, the artist has loaded on his colour till he has lost all quality and refinement. The subject, which will be remembered by most people, is that of some fisher-folk in a boat gathering seaweed. The figures stand out dark against an evening sky, glimpses of which are reflected in the sea, which is painted in long smears of colour apparently laid on with a trowel. "The Swineherd Gurth, the son of Beowulf" is a large landscape by C. E. Johnson, which is rather ugly, and raw in colour, but well composed. It would be better if more contemporary landscape painters possessed this artist's capability of composition; nowadays a young artist sits down and copies a bit of Nature, and thinks he has painted a landscape, whereas he has only

produced a study. He has possibly heard that Sir John Millais paints his landscapes thus; so he may do, but then he knows what to leave out, also he is Sir John Millais; and a young artist is still young, and has his business to learn. A small water-colour, "An Old Mill," by J. Wade, was also purchased this year. It is good in quality, but hardly of national importance.

In the following year, 1880, four important purchases were made, which include "A Visit to Æsculapius," by E. J. Poynter, R.A.; "Napoleon on board the Bellerophon," by W. Q. Orchardson, R.A.; "Britannia's Realm," by J. Brett, A.R.A.; and "Returning to the Fold," by H. W. B. Davis, R.A. Here, certainly, under the popular superstition that the bequest was to benefit young artists, was a chance for an outcry; but there is no doubt that as the President and Council got a chance of securing these works, they did perfectly right in buying them. "The Visit to Æsculapius" is one of Mr. Poynter's best works, painted before he developed that obtuseness of detail which now mars his work; the best part of the picture is the background, where, no doubt, Mr. Poynter's training as an architect stood in good stead. The figures of Venus and the Three Graces would be improved by better draughtsmanship in the wrists and ankles. The composition of the picture suffers from the fact that the figures are nearly all in one plane, and that the colour is rather crude. "Napoleon on board the Bellerophon" is also one of Mr. Orchardson's best works, though very inferior in technique to his present work. He has painted so many fine pictures of late years, and has improved so much in this particular, that it perhaps might be wished that one of his later works had been secured. "Britannia's Realm" might also be called Mr. Brett's best work. It is devoid of those prismatic and photographic qualities which he has of late affected. H. W. B. Davis's "Returning to the Fold" is the least satisfactory of the four, perhaps because it does not show the artist at his best.

The high level attained in 1880 is not maintained in 1881, for it is a long descent from the pictures first named to "The Last Voyage of Henry Hudson," by John Collier, nor is "The Prodigal Son," by W. Calder Marshall, R.A., of much higher stamp.

In 1882 a work of Marcus Stone's was

purchased. This artist's pictures are so popular with the general public that contemporary Art would not be considered as fully represented unless one at least of his works were purchased. This one entitled, "Il y en a toujours un autre," is a very good example.

"Teucer," by Hamo Thornycroft, is a very good example of the best school of contemporary sculpture: full of fine, vigorous modelling. The selections of the President and Council in sculpture seem to be much happier than in painting, possibly because the choice is more limited, and also because they are generally able to purchase the best work in ideal sculpture, for which—with sorrow be it said—there is not much sale in England, that is, at a remunerative price.

In 1883, a very fine work was purchased in the river scene entitled, "Toll, Glitter, Grime, and Wealth, on a Flowing Tide," by W. L. Wyllie, A.R.A. Here again, the trustees have been fortunate enough to secure what may be justly considered the masterpiece of the artist, for assuredly Mr. Wyllie has painted no better picture than this magnificent rendering of the always-interesting Pool of London.

"The Joyless Winter Day," by J. Farquharson, attracted much attention in the Royal Academy; but here in the gallery it strikes one as colourless and uninteresting. There is surely more colour to be found in snow than is here depicted.

In 1884, the purchases were "After Colloden, Rebel Hunting," by Seymour Lucas, A.R.A.; "The Vigil," by J. Pettie, R.A.; and a landscape, "My Love has gone a-Sailing," by David Murray, A.R.A. Mr. Seymour Lucas's picture is the best of the trio. There is some fine character drawing in the figures; but the light and shade is unsatisfactory. Mr. David Murray's landscape is pleasing; it is hung too high to be well seen; but it is not much praise to say that it is better than most of the landscapes here. Mr. Pettie's picture, "The Vigil," is the least satisfactory; the composition, which consists of a gaunt kneeling figure, very much to one side, is ill-considered, and the colour is bad.

In 1885, no less than six pictures were purchased, only three of which are of any interest. "Cat's-paws off the Land," by H. Moore, A.R.A., was painted in the year that the artist was elected to academic honours. It is marked by his marvellous knowledge of his subject, and is bright and pleasing in colour; but it is not by

any means up to the larger paintings of the sea which he has exhibited since, for which he obtained such high honours at the Paris Exhibition. "Found," by H. Herkomer, R.A., is a large landscape, possibly—after Mr. Parton's—the best in the collection. "The Stream," by J. C. Hook, R.A., is not at all a satisfactory example of this master of seascape. "Dog in the Manger," by W. H. Hunt, is a picture which, if painted half the size, would look twice as well. The calves are well painted, but are too clean, and look as if they had been specially spruced up before having their portraits taken. The whole picture is rather too British in character. "A Golden Thread," by J. M. Strudwick, is another of the Burne-Jones-and-water type—if such a description may be allowed. Mr. Burne-Jones is a great artist. He has a wonderful imagination, great poetic feeling, and strong sense of harmonious colouring; but, after all, he is mannered, and these mannerisms diluted are not exactly what are required in a national collection. The fondness of the President and Council for the works of Mr. Joseph Clarke is surprising. Not content with the masterpiece entitled "Early Promise," above referred to, they have presented the public with another example, entitled "Mother's Darling." Even popular taste could not have fallen lower than this.

It is pleasant, after the concluding bathos of the last year's purchase, to chronicle that, in 1886, the works secured were very much above the average. "Cromwell at Dunbar," by A. C. Gow, R.A., is a fine picture. It is not very forcible—perhaps Mr. Gow never is very forcible—but it is very correct and well-studied in drawing, and, as far as technique is concerned, better than anything he has done. "The Magic Circle," by J. W. Waterhouse, A.R.A., is one of those rare works which show a vivid imagination. The whole scene depicted in moonlight shows a keen appreciation of Nature, although, of course, it cannot have been painted from Nature. The colouring is soft and harmonious, and, although it is hung next to a glaring green landscape, it does not suffer at all, but rather shows how good it is. A most graceful little statue, called "Folly," by Onslow Ford, R.A., completes the purchases for this year, which are very creditable to the trustees, as displaying a catholic spirit and a keen appreciation of very diverse qualities; for what could be

more opposed than the work of Mr. Gow and Mr. Waterhouse! In all fairness it must be admitted that this catholic spirit—which if it does not encourage, at any rate tolerates, all styles—is evidenced frequently in the various purchases, although, perhaps, the spirit is rather strained when it descends to take notice of such works as “Early Promise,” and “Mother’s Darling.”

In 1887, five pictures, widely differing in character, were purchased. “Galway Gossip,” by E. A. Waterlow, A.R.A., and “When Nature Painted all Things Gay,” by Alfred Parsons, are two landscapes which show all the faults and all the excellences of the present school of landscape painters. They have the appearance of being direct renderings of some actual scene, very well painted, but lacking breadth and dignity. The values are wrong, and there is a want of atmosphere. In Mr. Parsons’ landscape the grass is as flat as the canvas, and has no perspective at all. These artists try to paint Nature exactly as they see it, and Nature is too much for them. Our great landscape artists did not work in this way; and, until by this method finer works than theirs can be produced, their way must be believed in. A tree must be judged by its fruit.

“The Last Match,” by W. Small, is a humorous picture of the kind frequently to be found in the Academy exhibition; it represents an Irishman in trouble with his pig, trying to light his pipe with his last match, while a colleen shelters him from the wind. It is very good of its kind, but that kind has a popularity which is fleeting. “Aysha,” by “Val Prinsep,” A.R.A., is a fanciful picture of an Indian girl, of no great interest. The remaining purchase of this year, “Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose,” by J. L. Sargent, has been a great bone of contention. On its appearance on the Academy walls, the artists all swore by it, the public would have none of it; but the President and Council settled the question by purchasing it. Now, there is a large section of artists who believe in the gospel laid down by Mr. Whistler, that what is to be sought for in a picture is not subject, but harmony—absolutely harmonious colouring. There is much to be said for the theory, and more to be said against it; but there it remains as the creed, for the time being, of many of the younger artists of to-day, especially amongst those known as im-

pressionists. Now, it is not often that we find an artist who can produce a picture in which the harmony is so perfect as to be sufficient: that is to say, in a picture which depends only on its harmony for its effect; but here, say the artists—not only those younger ones above referred, but the great majority of artists—in this picture of Mr. Sargent’s we have it. Surely any one looking at the picture must admit that they are right; that value, tone, and colour blend into one harmonious and charming whole. The picture is slightly decorative in treatment, and that is what the public cannot understand; they want to know where the sky is, and what those lilies are doing at the top of the picture. They can see two beautiful children lighting Chinese lanterns in a garden, with the glow reflected on their cheeks; but they cannot conceive that possibly the artist did not want his sky, as it would have interfered with his scheme of colour, so he carried his flower background up to the top of the picture. But whatever may now be thought, a few years hence, when Impressionism shall have gone the way of æstheticism, it may possibly be found that it produced one fine work in “Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose.”

In 1888 four pictures were purchased: “Uplands and Sky,” by Adrian Stokes; “The Pool of London,” by Vicat Cole, R.A.; “Saint Martin’s in the Fields,” by W. Logsdail; “A Hopeless Dawn” by Frank Bramley—a quartett of works on the acquisition of which the trustees are to be congratulated. “The Pool of London” is the least satisfactory—it lacks freshness and breadth, and smacks too much of the studio. It has to compete with Mr. Wyllie’s magnificent rendering of the same subject. “Uplands and Sky,” by Adrian Stokes, is a fine painting of cattle; “Saint Martin’s in the Fields,” by W. Logsdail, will be appreciated by Londoners as a very truthful rendering of a well-known corner. How beautifully Mr. Logsdail draws architecture, and how thoroughly he appreciates the London character, and takes advantage of the beautiful grey colour which is seen nowhere else! A finer piece of painting than the little flower-girl in the foreground of this picture it would be difficult to find. “A Hopeless Dawn,” by Frank Bramley, is a very fine work, the direct antithesis of “Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose.” Here everything is subject; the artist has a story to tell, and he tells it in the most

direct and simple manner. Melodramatic! say the votaries of the other school. No, this is not melodrama, at least, as they meant it, but rather the stately griefs and bowed head of tragedy. Pathos it is, too, of the most moving kind, to which all things in the picture give point. This is British Art of the true kind, superior even to the sneers of Mr. Whistler. A protest must be entered against the method of description on the frame; the proper title is "A Hopeless Dawn," not simply "Hopeless Dawn" as written. This kind of mistake occurs several times in this collection.

In 1889 some good pictures were bought, including "Charterhouse Chapel," by H. Herkomer, R.A., which naturally carries the mind back to "The Last Muster," by the same artist. It will not, however, compare with it for a moment. The figures of the old "Codds," as Carthusians call them, are finely painted, but they are much too large, and being all dressed in black, fairly swamp the picture. If the figures had been kept smaller, and more of the chapel, which is an interesting building, had been included, the picture would have been much improved. There is always a very commonplace effect about a canvas that is filled up with figures of a large size, except, of course, in the case of one or two figures. "The Prodigal Son," by John M. Swan, is a picture by an artist very little known to the public, for the reason that most of his work has been exhibited in the French Salon. He is a superb painter of animals. This picture hangs over Mr. Bramley's, and is also painted with a daybreak effect; but otherwise has nothing in common, except, perhaps, that it is a very pathetic rendering of the Bible story, magnificently painted. The two, however, should not have been hung together. "All Hands to the Pumps," by H. S. Tuke, is a very clever picture; but like most of the work of the Newlyn School, it is very monotonous in colour. It strikes one as being an absolutely truthful rendering. "Sheep-washing," by J. Aumonier, is a pleasing landscape, but of no very great interest. The same might be said of "Germinal," a water-colour, by L. Smythe. Its execution is good, it is very pleasant; but why is it of national interest? "Ignis Fatuus," a bronze relief, by H. A. Pegram, does not very clearly explain its subject. In a circular panel are two figures, male and female, overcome by some intoxicating

fumes; at least, that is apparently what is intended, but the subject demands greater explanatory treatment than could be given in a piece of sculpture, and should, therefore, have been avoided. The modelling is very clever and crisp.

Of the purchases of 1890 only one has yet been hung. "Evening Stillness," a water-colour by R. B. Nisbet, is a very beautiful landscape with a gloaming effect. Certainly this is the best of the three water-colours bought by the trustees.

It will be seen from the description, that, though there are some fine pictures included in the purchases, there is much that is of no interest, while some well-known names are conspicuous by their absence. There is nothing by Sir John Millais, nor by Alma Tadema, Briton Rivière, or Burne-Jones, and no sculpture by Alfred Gilbert, and no painting by Sir F. Leighton; the work of J. C. Hook and Henry Moore is badly represented; nor is a single water-colour painter of any note included in the list. Surely all these ought to be represented in a national gallery of English Art, and if no examples of their work can be purchased from the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, possibly the sales at Christie's might supply the want.

In the management of a fund of this description, it is impossible to please all; but the safeguard lies in the collective wisdom of the President and Council, who ought to know what a good picture is, and can, by a judicious selection, guide the public taste to a better appreciation of real merit.

It is hoped that the high standard which has been reached by the purchases made in some years, may be maintained in the future, and that it may be free from the occasional lapses into the commonplace and uninteresting which have marked the formation of the Chantrey Collection.

SMOLLETT IN THE SOUTH.

THAT sunny side of the European garden wall, stretching eastward from Marseilles along the sea-coast, has become, in these latter days, such a favourite haunt for those blessed with money and leisure enough to enable them to take flight and escape the rigours of such a winter and spring as we have endured, and are enduring, that it seems hard to imagine a time when a visit to it might not form a portion of the season's round.

In the last century a limited number of the golden youth went the grand tour; but this was, for most of them, an affair of seeing the manners and cities of all sorts and conditions of men; a progress, and not a settling-down for the winter in some secluded, sunny nook, after the fashion of the wiser of our modern winter pilgrims. Certain of the more opulent invalids, who had lost faith in Bath and Cheltenham, journeyed in search of health to Tours or Montpellier—cities of consideration where society was to be found, and where most of the wants of the valetudinarian could be supplied—but the people who ventured on a sojourn at Nice were very few until times comparatively recent. One record, however, exists of a stay there of a year and a half's duration: the one contained in Smollett's most interesting letters from abroad during 1763 and the following year.

He was at that time suffering from an obstinate attack of asthma, and, like many other invalids, was ordered to try the climate of Montpellier, a town standing in the direct path of the Mistral in its withering course from the Alps to the Mediterranean, and about as favourable a haunt for the invalid as his native Scotland. Smollett's first experiences of foreign travel might stand side by side with those of many a traveller of to-day; and, indeed, as long as we are in his company it is impossible to avoid the reflection how little the humours and accidents of travel are altered by the flight of years.

The farther south he gets—though in Languedoc all articles of housekeeping are cheaper than in any other part of France—the higher he finds the price of accommodation. And why? Simply because he is nearing that country where the English travellers most do congregate. The air, he further informs us, is counted salutary in "catarrhus consumptionis," from its dryness and elasticity, but is too sharp for cases of "pulmonary imposthumes."

But in any case it did not suit Smollett's complaint. And one is not surprised at this, after reading his remarks on the climate. In November it began to rain, and went on without ceasing for the best part of a week, leaving the air so loaded with vapour that there was no walking after sunset without getting wet to the skin. But there is a hint of another reason which may have urged on his flight. There was a regular English resident society. There were "tolerable" concerts

twice a week, and receptions ad libitum. "These very circumstances," he naively remarks, "would determine me to leave. I cannot bear a company which pours in unexpectedly at all hours." Again, from his own knowledge of medicine, he seems to have discovered that the leading physician was a pretentious impostor.

He travelled from Montpellier by Beaucaire, Nîmes, Aix, to Brignolles; and during the last stage the Mistral blew so bitter a blast that the coachman, either incapable from frozen fingers, or distracted by the malignity of the wind, smashed the carriage wheel against a street-corner. The landlady at Brignolles, a good Catholic, wanted him to dine off stinking fish and a ragout of eggs and onions, as it was a "maigre" day; but the doctor had caught sight of a leg of mutton and a brace of partridges hanging in the larder as he entered, and, after some difficulty, he managed to persuade her to put these on the board.

Here he met a friendly French officer, who had once been a prisoner of war in England, and felt no rancour towards his whilom jailers. This was a true son of the South, for he assured Smollett that there was nowhere upon earth another spot so fair as Brignolles. He was also an exponent of the tradition—transmitted to, and amplified by, the southern landlord of to-day—that the Mistral is a wind very rare in these happy lands; that this season was altogether an exceptional one. One may imagine that the doctor, blue with cold, and shivering, with his lungs and throat rasped by the infernal wind, and with that leg of mutton question not yet satisfactorily settled, did not quite reciprocate the officer's politeness, and may have growled out the remark that, according to the report of the inhabitants of any particular place, bad seasons there are always exceptional. But then he heard the remark for the first time, and may have given it credit; and we may hope that his reply was more courteous than that which ordinarily falls from the lips of the contemporary Briton on being told, for the sixth time, in the middle of a snowstorm at Cannes, that such a phenomenon had not been witnessed within the memory of living men.

And sure enough, the next morning, at Brignolles, the snow lay a foot thick; and the good doctor rubbed his eyes, and fancied he must have mistaken his way and got into the Scottish Highlands. It

is to be feared that his temper must have been a little upset, for that same day, when he halted for dinner at Mui—a wretched place he calls it—he tried the risky game of reckoning without his host, and laid down two livres in payment for a dinner which the landlord valued at three. Recriminations followed; but the doctor would not budge an inch—no more would the postillions, when, by a wink from Boniface, they were advised as to how matters stood.

"The fellows declared they would not budge," he writes, "until I should pay their master; and as I threatened them with manual chastisement, they alighted, and disappeared in a twinkling. I was now so incensed that, though I could hardly breathe, though the afternoon was far advanced, and the street covered with wet snow, I walked to the Consul of the town, and made my complaint in form. This magistrate, who seemed to be a tailor, accompanied me to the inn, where, by this time, the whole town was assembled, and endeavoured to persuade me to compromise the affair. I said, as he was the magistrate, that I would stand to his award; that I had already paid a reasonable price for the dinner; and that I now demanded post-horses according to the King's ordonnance. The subergiste said the horses were ready, but the guides were run away; and he could not find others. I argued with great vehemence, offering to leave a louis d'or for the poor, provided the Consul would oblige the rascal to do his duty. The Consul shrugged up his shoulders, and declared that it was not in his power. This was a lie; but I perceived that he had no mind to disoblige the publican. If my mules had not been sent on, I should certainly have not only payed what I thought proper, but corrected the landlord into the bargain for his insolence and extortion; but now I was entirely at his mercy; and as the Consul continued to exhort me in very humble terms to comply with his demands, I thought proper to acquiesce. Then the postillions immediately appeared; the crowd seemed to exult in the triumph of the subergiste; and I was obliged to travel in the night, in very severe weather."

The passage of the Esterel Mountains was safely accomplished, the fierce banditti, which in times comparatively recent had frequented them, having been exterminated. There are some who would

dispute this last statement, and maintain the leaders' descendants still exist, and prosperously, too, in the immediate neighbourhood, having exchanged the carbine and the knife for the baccarat-table and the roulette-wheel; while others, sprung, peradventure, from the first lieutenants, lay down, near their caves, courts for a certain game of ball, and subscribe liberally to foreign journals, and even subsidise heretical places of worship as lures for the traveller worth fleecing. Beyond the Esterels the doctor found at last the summer of which he was in search. On one side of the post-house, where he halted to dine, was winter, bare and bleak, and on the other, the slopes of the mountains were covered with oranges, and myrtles, and sweet juniper, and all manner of fragrant and lovely flowers. The next night was passed at Cannes, a little fishing town agreeably situated on the head of the sea; and there he heard report of a certain Monsieur Nadeau d'Etrueil, a former Governor of Guadeloupe, who was condemned, like another famous, or infamous officer of more recent times, to imprisonment for life in the island prison of Saint Marguerite. At the Var, the frontier of France was passed, and there the doctor's luggage underwent a Customs visitation as terrible as that which now awaits the modern traveller's farther east at Vintimiglia. The same methods, however, which will now pass any number of Saratoga trunks unopened through the Custom House at the last-named place, was then sufficient to frank the doctor's luggage into the country of Nice. He counsels all travellers to be free with their coin at such junctures, and, as a somewhat singular comment on his late policy at Mui, to put up with the extortions of innkeepers with a smiling face.

At Nice, Smollett found the inns detestable, and, as no ready-furnished lodgings were to be had, he hired a ground-floor at the rate of twenty pounds a year, which he calls an extortionate sum. The good doctor would surely have a fit, were he now on earth and wanting to hire a similar apartment on the Promenade des Anglais. He found the town dirty and malodorous; and those who have perambulated the town in the old quarters—the Nice of Smollett's day—will agree that the increase of sanitary science has been less rapid than that of the rent of apartments. The inhabitants must have been a hardy race; for he speaks of the houses of the humbler

sort having windows filled only with paper. The bourgeois, however, were already falling into sybaritic ways, and fitting their windows with glass.

Nowadays, many home-abiding people receive from friends on the Riviera boxes of cut flowers at a time when the dearth of English bloom makes the present doubly acceptable. When the box is not smashed they praise the Post Office; and if they have never travelled on its system, say kind things of the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean Railway for thus speeding to them this floral gift, which will serve to make the drawing-room bright for a week with anemones and violets, and generally remark that this is a wonderful age that we are living in. Hear what Smollett says in 1764:

"I must tell you that presents of carnations are sent from hence, in the winter, to Turin and Paris, nay, sometimes as far as London, by the post. They are packed up in a wooden box, without any sort of preparation, one pressed upon another. The person who receives them cuts off a little bit of the stalk and steeps them for two hours in vinegar and water, when they recover their full bloom and beauty. Then he places them in water-bottles in an apartment where they are screened from the severities of the weather, and they will continue fresh and unfaded the best part of a month."

The horror of the Barbary corsairs—evidences of which the visitors of to-day may mark in the massive fortifications of Eza, Auribeau, and many others of the coast villages—was yet real and active in Smollett's time; but, according to his showing, France, England, and Holland had entered into a sort of informal partnership with these pirates, by keeping them well supplied with arms and ammunition, and even granting them subsidies, so as to enable them to maintain a continual war against Spain and the other Catholic Mediterranean powers. Thus these latter, fearing to trade in their own vessels, were forced to employ the maritime powers as carriers. It is not pleasant to be reminded that the mighty stream of British commerce should ever have been swelled by such unclean affluents as Smollett here hints of. In the harbour of Villafranca, where now one generally sees a trim American corvette lying at anchor, Smollett found two Sardinian galleys filled with criminals, with here and there a quasi-prisoner of war, taken in battle with

some Salée or Tunis rover. To most people it would seem that these gentry might well have been swung at the yard-arm at once; but Smollett talks, in a strain which reminds one of the contemporary sentimentalist, about the iniquity of mixing them up with common criminals and banditti. The condition of the convicts was very shocking. They lay in indescribable filth, chained day and night to their benches. A few were knitting stockings: but the greater part lay in stupefied idleness, though at this time the road from Nice to Villafranca was scarce passable on horseback, and might have been made fit for carriages by the labour of these convicts in the course of a few months.

Our traveller's northern Protestantism was somewhat affronted by the prevalence of religious superstition, reigning under the darkest shades of ignorance. In Nice he found that the churches were sanctuaries for all kinds of criminals—robbers, smugglers, fraudulent bankrupts, being received with open arms, and never given up till their pardon had been arranged. At the present time there is a legend that an influx of a similar character sets towards Nice every autumn; but as none of its members are ever seen inside a church, it is to be inferred that the privilege of sanctuary has been withdrawn. Many of them live royally, and pay their way like honest men; and, having carefully mastered the details of the laws of extradition, are able to face the police with an untroubled brow. Smollett complains that the English were greatly overcharged at Nice, just as at Montpellier, for all they bought in the shops; and characterises the shopkeepers themselves as greedy and over-reaching, many of them bankrupts of Marseilles and Genoa, and other countries, who had fled from their creditors to Nice, which, being a free port, afforded an asylum to foreign cheats and sharpers of every denomination. They must, however, have been clever men of business, for he remarks that the Jews of Nice were very poor. Indeed, the picture he draws of the poverty of the labouring classes at every point he touched during his journey along the coast to Genoa, is a terrible one. There was not even a mule-path on land, so he hired a felucca and halted at Monaco, Mentone, San Remo, Noli, Savona, and many other towns, and his remarks are all in the same key. Round about Nice he found the labourers diminutive, meagre,

withered, and dirty; half naked, and bearing all the signs of extreme poverty. Their food was the refuse of the garden, and their hogs lived better than their children. They were all thieves and beggars; but, in spite of this, serious crime was very rare, nor was there any drunkenness or riot. He finds another gauge of the prevalent misery in the condition of the domestic animals. The horses and mules were mere skeletons, and the cats and dogs dangerously rapacious through hunger. Birds were hardly ever seen on account of the incessant shooting them for sale as game.

At San Remo and Noli, and at every other point of stoppage, the same evidences of poverty were apparent. The inns were filthy, and the landlords churlish and extortionate. Where the railway and the road now run, there was a rocky path, practicable only to the inhabitants; the Republic of Genoa, for some reason or other, being unwilling to encourage settlement in that part of its dominions. Considering what the discomforts of the voyage must have been, it is wonderful that Smollett should have kept so well the even temper which, with a few slight exceptions, characterises his remarks, and have found opportunity of giving so much valuable and interesting information as to the social condition of the countries he traversed. His description of the Roman remains at Fréjus, and Cimiés, and Turbia is full and scholarly, while a large proportion of the English who now rush past them, intent on a spell of gambling or winter tennis, have never heard of their existence, being, one and all, too busy with their idleness to spare a moment for the consideration of these problems, which are just as susceptible of interesting treatment now as they were in Smollett's time.

MRS. DIFFIDENCE.

MRS. DIFFIDENCE, as readers of that almost unequalled classic, "The Pilgrim's Progress," will remember, was the wife of Giant Despair; and so, we may suppose, part owner of Doubting Castle. Her name has been a puzzle to many. Diffidence we have been used to look upon as an amiable weakness; in the young, indeed, as almost a virtue. But Mrs. Diffidence is an awful character, a Jezebel, or Lady Macbeth, who stirs her husband to cruelty. In the curtain conferences that Bunyan

describes so graphically, it is the wife who suggests all the husband's barbarities. It is she who recommends the use of the grievous crab-tree cudgel, and the invidious persuasion to suicide, and the exhibition of the bones and skulls of those who had before been slain. It was through the counsel of the artful old giantess that the escape of the giant's captives had almost been prevented.

"I fear," said she to her husband, "that they live in hope that some will come to relieve them; or that they have pick-locks about them, by means of which they hope to escape."

"And sayest thou so, my dear!" said the giant—they were a loving pair; we must say that for them. "I will, therefore, search them in the morning."

But happily, in the morning, the birds were flown.

It was a curious notion of Bunyan's, to kill off the giant and giantess in the second part of the Allegory, and destroy Doubting Castle. We cannot but conclude that there has been a marvellous resurrection of the fond couple, and a rebuilding—by voluntary subscription, or otherwise—of their venerable habitation. The reason why the name of Diffidence appears to us inappropriate to the terrible old lady is that the word has changed in the two centuries since Bunyan wrote, if not in its literal meaning, in its ordinary use. From fide, to trust, we get confide, the opposite to which is diffide—a word not out of use in Bunyan's time. Confidence, therefore, is trust, and diffidence is unbelief. In Bunyan's eyes, nothing was worse than unbelief, or even doubt. As to Tennyson's "honest doubt," it would have made Bunyan furious. "When Diffidence, the giantess, came up to help" her husband, as in duty bound, "old Mr. Honest cut her down at one blow." Honesty and unbelief were in Bunyan's view of things flat opposites. At first, diffidence was mainly distrust of others, now it is distrust of ourselves. And this, I dare say, Bunyan would have said is retribution. We begin by doubting the higher powers, we end by renouncing faith in ourselves.

Taking diffidence in its modern sense, it is pretty evident that it must be conquered before a man can do anything great and good; or anything great and bad. A diffident person would never have won for himself favourable notice in De Quincey's "Essay on Murder." If he had begun a

murder well, he would have become panic-struck as it proceeded, and huddled it up at the close. A diffident burglar would never retire upon his savings. He would even run the risk of being driven in the end to earn his living honestly. We may be diffident in well-doing, and that is a pity; or we may be diffident in evil-doing, and that may keep us out of mischief.

The diffident people will not count for very much in the battle of life. When they were boys at school and aides were tossed for at any game, they were always the last selected. And now—who would choose a diffident soldier to command an army, or a diffident sailor to direct a fleet? Who would submit to be operated upon by a diffident surgeon, or would wish to have his portrait painted by a diffident artist? A man has no chance in any walk of life without some measure of confidence, and we may almost go on to say that in proportion to his confidence will be his success. We first overcame our diffidence when we learned to walk and to talk—in the walking we displayed our physical courage, in the talking our moral courage; and it is very doubtful if we have ever done anything more heroic since. What clever little chaps we must have been, to balance ourselves longways, and then to lift one foot into the air, thus disturbing the balance so painfully acquired, and so through all the complicated evolutions which constitute the science of walking! And talking—think of the decision of character required in order to the making of uncouth sounds with the mouth and throat that shall be intelligible to the stupid grown-up creatures around us! You have to make a dash at it, or you will never be able to do it at all. Especially you must set loosely by all considerations of personal dignity. So also in mature life; no man has achieved distinction who has been afraid of making a fool of himself. The public never thoroughly appreciate a man until he has made an exhibition of himself. Some idols of the multitude repeat the performance annually, but the worst of this plan is, that properly to strike the mind, each performance must be more outrageous than the last, and that calls for rare inventive power, and is a terrible strain upon the poor idol's wooden head.

Moses undertook at a divine command some of the most stupendous enterprises ever committed to man, but he was very reluctant to undertake the task.

A man may be able to overcome his diffidence and not be able to overcome his modesty. Or it may be that the misgivings of the great Jewish leader are to be reckoned among the "fears of the brave, and follies of the wise"; the cases in which a man fails in his strongest point. Oliver Cromwell had his diffident moments, and Queen Elizabeth. The first Napoleon supplies almost the grandest instance of self-confidence that the world has seen. But, if De Bourrienne is to be trusted, there was a time in Napoleon's early history when his great fortunes nearly received a fatal check because of his diffidence. In appearing before the Council of the Ancients, "nothing could be more confused, or worse enunciated, than the ambiguous and disjointed replies of Buonaparte." The "interruptions, apostrophes, and interrogations, overwhelmed him; he believed himself lost." But the Ancients were diffident, too, or De Bourrienne thinks "that, instead of sleeping on the morrow in the palace of the Luxembourg, he would have finished his part in the square of the Revolution." That is to say, losing his head metaphorically would have led to his losing it literally, the guillotine being still kept handy.

Little Johnny Russell, as he was affectionately called, hardly knew what diffidence was. He thought he could do anything—the saying has it—from performing a surgical operation to commanding the Channel Fleet. But if he had been only ordinarily confident, how would he have got his Reform Bill passed? The Reform Bills since have been far more sweeping than that first one; but the carrying of them has been child's play as compared with the desperate struggle by which the victory of 1832 was won.

An ordinary man can hardly grasp the idea of courage and determination such as must be possessed by commanders of armies in great battles. Think of the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo! The immense forces arrayed against him; the numbers on his side; the tremendous issues that hung upon victory or defeat; the fatal consequences that might follow the least error in judgement! Think of these considerations pressing upon the brain of one mortal man! And he alone responsible! Why, many poor wretches have cut their throats to escape a thousandth part of such a responsibility!

We may thank Providence that we have

not been called to fill the throne or wield the bâton, or even handle the more peaceful crozier. It is little that we should be asked to show decision of character in common things. The man set a good example who, being asked if he could play the violin, replied that he didn't know, for he hadn't tried. If a cook wants to retain her proper supremacy, she must be ready to furnish any dish for which her mistress calls. *Marinated pheasant poultés à la braise impériale*? Certainly, madam. "This is a difficulty, brethren," said the preacher, coming to a perplexing passage, "one that has puzzled the most eminent expositors; let us look it boldly in the face, and—pass on." Many men have made their reputations by looking difficulties boldly in the face; that they pass on doesn't seem to detract from their fame.

Mrs. Diffidence would be a benefactor to mankind if she would confine her ministrations to the wicked. If she would unsettle the nerves of the despot, divert the aim of the assassin, paralyse the tongue of the slanderer, we would count her a friend. Mischievous boys, too, would be greatly benefited by some lessons from the giantess. But, alas!—it seems hard to blame her for it—she feels most at home in the society of the wise and good. Why the wicked should do evil with both hands diligently, and the righteous put only a finger to their work, is one of those difficulties which we can recognise but cannot solve. Instead of destroying Doubting Castle, honest folk would do well, after furnishing it with fresh bolts and bars, to beguile into its chambers all rogues, knaves, liars, and other enemies of mankind, and get the giant and his wife to keep them there for ever.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "Louis Draycott," "Geoffrey Stirling," "Aunt Hepsey's Foundling," etc.

CHAPTER II. PHIL'S FEAT OF DARING.

IN a community such as a garrison, where ramifications are numerous, and ties many and complicated, there is a good deal of that spirit abroad which is said to instigate one sheep to follow another sheep through a gap in the hedge, until the whole flock are landed in the next meadow, or out on the road, as the case may be.

A week later than that afternoon gathering at Major Clutterbuck's which was described in our last chapter, every one of that "set," and various people in various other sets, had called upon "Jones, of Seething Lane."

The man's unassuming simplicity, his gullelessness, his plain, straightforward ways—his naïve admiration of the people and things among which he found himself, won their way with every one who came in contact with him. People liked him, and cultivated him. His original remarks and ideas were something fresh to them, tickling the jaded senses of men tethered in an island home, and pretty well acquainted with all the specimens therein congregated. The youngsters sat round him delightedly, mostly astride barrack-room chairs—chair which were as great a puzzle to Mr. Jones as could have been any utterance of the Sphinx. Indeed, everything was a puzzle to Mr. Jones. These young men—so highly bred, so full of knowledge of the world, visiting at palaces and such-like places, and yet so shabby in their mode of life!

"Government gives you but poor kind of places," he said, once, glancing round the room of the Honourable Bob. The Honourable Bob screwed his glass painfully tight into his right eye.

"Ya'sas," he said, "the Government has no consideration for a fellow's instincts"; then, with a shrug and a look round the bare, whitewashed walls on which a long list of subalterns had paid barrack-damages for "nails knocked into plaster," "Government's a beast—still we manage to rub along somehow. I hire that sofa from a ruffian in Strada Stretta—a confounded old Jew fellow who charges me more than sixty times its value, fact—'pon honour!"

"What," thought Jones, of Seething Lane, "is the use of being the Honourable Bob, or the Honourable Anything, if you have to hire a sofa from a ruffian-like Jew, and live in a room without a wall-paper!"

It appeared to Mr. Jones that the pomp and glitter of military life had sides to it of which his wildest imagination had never dreamed.

"Why, if I asked Dodson"—Dodson was his chief manager—"to sit in a room like that, he'd—he'd blow my head off—I'm blest if he wouldn't. . . . And yet . . . why, just look at the cut of them when they're got up for show! Dodson couldn't do it though he tried for a month of Sundays—nor I couldn't do it—nor none of us couldn't do it. They

look as if their clothes grew on 'em, and how they manage to walk without getting their swords between their legs, beats me hollow. Jones, my boy, you're learning a sight more of life in a week in this bit of an island, than you've done in all the years that have gone before . . . of gay life, mind, life in the gay world, not business life—I yield to no man there. I've worked hard, and made my pile—as they say in America—by the sweat of my brow, and it's meet that I should take a little jaunt and see the bright side of things—that's what it is—and I'm having a good time, and no mistake."

Thus ran the thoughts of the man who found himself in the midst of such strange surroundings.

Major Clutterbuck had led the way, the Honourable Bob had followed; gradually Mr. Jones had made the acquaintance of a still wider circle. To such men as Charley Rowan and Vernon Halkett the straightforward, clearly-apparent excellences of the man appealed strongly. He had no wish to appear other than he was. No villa residence at Highbury, or Reigate was brought to the fore as a sort of set-off against the City. He was proud of being a business man, and of the character he had made for himself in that capacity. Deeply interested in the men of a world differing so much from his own world, he had yet no shadow of a wish to try and cross the boundary that separated them. He told them in his simple, unpretending way how he had raised himself from very small things to the position he now held. He seemed more surprised at his own success than even his listeners. His keen eyes softened and glistened as he spoke of his old mother, who was so bewildered by the luxury with which he insisted upon surrounding her, that she appeared to be very much in the state of the little old woman in the immortal rhyme, who cried, "If I be I, as I hopes I be——"

"Mother wouldn't come to live in London, not she," he said, beaming upon them as they sat eagerly listening, and feeling that at last heaven had, in truth, sent them some new thing; "she thinks all the wickedness of the world is gathered together in London, and is always warning me against its ways and its snares. I couldn't get her to set her foot in a brougham, nor a victoria, nor nothing of that sort; so I've got her a gig—a first-class kind of a gig, you know—and she says that it's a seemly kind of a

vehicle enough, and fit for a plain Christian woman. She's taken to it, you may say, and is proud of it in her own fashion, telling people it is a gift from her son, who is a rich man in London City, and can afford it right enough without wronging any man. I expect you all know the old song!

And ye shall walk in silk attire,
And siller have to spare.

I went in for singing a good deal at one time; I'd a sweet little pipe of a voice when I was a kid. They'd used to set me in a little chair on the table in the inn parlour—the 'Rosy Jane' the inn was called—and make me sing for them. 'Little Nightingale' they used to call me, and they'd hammer the table like anything when I'd done. My father was the village post-master, and much thought of as a man of parts. He was proud enough to hear me sing, I can tell you, and that was the song he loved best of all. I never thought in those days that I should say those self-same words to my old mother, and mean them, too."

They were deeply interested. The Honourable Bob said "By Jove!" many times during the recital. When Jones, of Seething Lane, quavered a verse of the said song in a not unmelodious—though rather worn—baritone, his satisfaction knew no bounds. He swore it was better than the opera. Mr. Jones was flattered, and sang a second verse, and even a third.

It has been said that the good man was somewhat stout and florid. After his dinner he would sometimes get a bit mottled about his clean-shaven cheeks; but he was one who knew what it meant to be moderate in all things, and his eyes never lost their clear and kindly light, nor his voice its pleasant timbre. In certain aspects his features might be termed heavy, a wonderful refinement and softness was given by the deep cleft in a finely-formed chin; and surely there never was a kindlier smile!

He dined at mess as the guest of Major Clutterbuck, sitting on that radiant gentleman's right, and opposite Lindsay, the senior Major. Mr. Jones was in a high state of contentment. He looked up and down the "thin, red line" of scarlet coats on either side the long table, wondering within himself that the men liked to have their coats made like a schoolboy's Eton jacket, and the waistcoats set so

thick with buttons down the front; but owning that the effect taken on the whole was fine. He glanced curiously at the mess-waiters flitting about in their purple plush liveries, and white silk stockings; at the great silver centre-piece opposite the Major in command, representing a certain battle in which the 193rd had been the only European regiment engaged. He said to his neighbour that it was "massive"; that was the aspect in which it struck him most. As he gazed at everything, and listened to the string band for which the corps was famous, discouraging "most excellent music," Mr. Jones thought that his lines had fallen to him in pleasant places, and that all this would astonish Dodson not a little.

On one hand of Major Lindsay sat an apoplectic Colonel of the R. A., whose uniform looked as if it wanted letting out, while lower down were a couple of officers of the French navy, belonging to a man-of-war at present anchored in the Grand Harbour. Near them again, and chatting to them in their native tongue with perfect ease and fluency, was Charley Rowan, in his dress of "Lincoln green."

After a long look in that direction, Mr. Jones turned to Major Clutterbuck with a beaming smile and sparkling eyes.

"It's fine to hear him parly-voicing like that, isn't it, now? He'd be worth four hundred a year in the City if he can write it as glib."

The Major stroked down his mighty moustache; the man on the other side apparently got a crumb in his throat; and the goggle eyes of the Colonel opposite bulged in his head, and glared across the table; then, taking advantage of a fit of delirium on the part of the flute, who rushed into the wildest variations upon the theme of "Auld Lang Syne," and claimed the general attention, he put a question sotto voce to Major Lindsay:

"Who the deuce has Clutterbuck got in tow now?"

"A rare specimen of the raw material," answered the other, in the same tone, "a simple child of Nature; but a good old sort, for all that."

The flute had by this time recovered from his convulsive attack, and was perspiring freely, as he acknowledged the plaudits that followed.

The R. A. Colonel honoured the "good old sort" with a good deal of notice, after this, and was presented, across the table, by Major Lindsay. The three diamonds

that glistened and gleamed in the exceedingly dress-shirt of Mr. Jones, of Seething Lane, were as the belt of stars in the constellation of Orion. It would, indeed, be sacrilege to compare them to any lesser thing; while the sister gem that shone upon his little finger might be regarded as a fixed star of the first magnitude. He was a jewel himself, if brightness and beamingness counted for anything, and was making up his mind that, when he invested in a first-class West-End residence, he should also have a string band to play to him while he ate.

You see, a person's ideas are apt to rise with their circumstances—to take wings, as it were, and flutter akyward. If any one had told Jones, of Seething Lane, a month ago, that he would take up the notion of having a private band, he would have laughed that person to scorn. Even as it was, he had misgivings as to what Dodson would think of the suggestion—a misgiving which he soothed by the reflection that Dodson, though an admirable man of business, had as yet had "no scope," and that, in consequence of this limitation, his ideas wanted widening.

Upon adjournment to the ante-room Mr. Jones found his sense of enjoyment distinctly growing. They were such pleasant, affable fellows! Even the bibulous baronet—not yet in a fully "ripe" condition, but getting on that way, balancing himself alternately on his toes and his spurred heels, making a pleasant click and clatter as he did so, and telling eye-opening stories to a select circle of listeners—even he had his good points in Mr. Jones's eyes, for, had he not said, "Welcome to Malta, sir; glad to know you. Come-and-dine"—this was all one word—"let-you-know-which-night"—this was another—and the stranger felt really touched and flattered by so much cordiality on the part of Sir Peyton Paling, Bart. There are things in mercy hidden from us; and it was not given to Mr. Jones to know that the bibulous one asked every one to dine with him after a certain hour in the day, and that no one ever took the slightest notice of these casual invitations.

The Honourable Bob swooped down upon Major Clutterbuck's guest like a hawk. He screwed his glass in his eye, and in a perfectly unostentatious manner gloated over the trio of stars that gleamed upon the expansive bosom of Mr. Jones.

"I'm glad to see you," he said, hovering, as it were, with a great, glad smile lighting

up his expressive countenance; "I saw you at mess, you know; shining from afar, eh? and all that sort of thing. I hope you had a good time?"

"You admire my little ornaments?" said Mr. Jones, also with a smile. "Well, I think they're good. I like things good."

"So do I," replied the other, "when I can pay for them, or get 'em on tick, don't you know. But it's not often I can do either. And there's that Jew fellow, he drains my small resources—'pon honour now."

"What! the man with the sofa?" said Mr. Jones, amazed at the destitution of these smart young soldiers.

"Oh," said the other, in a *débonnaire* manner, "he's no heart. He doesn't care, bless you, what kind of decorations I wear. By the way, you should see our Chief. He's away, you know; but, give you my word, he's encrusted all over with 'em. A regular crustacean, that's what he is."

"With—er—all ornaments, do you mean?" asked Mr. Jones, eagerly.

"No, no; things he's won, you know—medals, and crosses, and all that sort of thing. He's like a shop window in the season—immense, you know."

"Dear me," said the deeply-interested guest, "I should very much like to have seen him. He must be a very distinguished man."

"Oh, deuced. He spitted fourteen Sepoys just like so many larks—give you my word—all as dead as door-nails in five minutes, not a squeak left in one of 'em. Thought nothing of it, either. Don't believe I've ever heard him mention it all the time I've been in the regiment."

"They tell me he is gone home to be married?" said Mr. Jones, speaking with some hesitation, for he was the most delicate-minded of men, and fancied he might be making too free.

"Yes; going to marry a lovely widow, by Jove! She's a fine woman, too. There was a ball at old Bogles's, you know, and she knocked all the other women nowhere—"

"Old—?" said Mr. Jones, now fairly bewildered.

"Old Bogles—the Governor, you know—we call him that for short—it suits him down to the ground, give you my word. He has a way of poking out his head and blinking at you—deuced near-sighted—asked his own butler to conduct a Royal Highness down to dinner

once, under the impression he was the biggest swell of the lot. The man nearly fainted, was led out gasping, in fact, like a blessed fish just landed. Her Royal Highness was seen to smile—she's a regular brick, you know, and no nonsense about her—not she. She overtook Ginger one day—you know Ginger of ours?—well, the poor beggar had sprained his ankle, and he was limping along like one o'clock. There was the Princess in a moment pulling up her ponies so sharp they nearly swallowed their bits, and before you could say Jack Robinson, there was Ginger—well, you know—Ginger had greatness thrust upon him, and was driven to his quarters in style. That's a good idea, a man having greatness thrust upon him, whether he will or won't; don't know where I got it from, don't think it's original, fancy I've heard it before, you know; Milton, I expect, or some of that lot—"

"It is Shakespeare," said Mr. Jones, quietly.

"Oh, have it your own way," said the Honourable Bob. "I don't care who said it; it's the idea I like. I tell you it suits Ginger down to the ground. I've been telling Mr. Jones about the Chief, you know," he continued, turning confidently to Captain Rowan, "what a blazing-away kind of fellow he is when he's in his war-paint—"

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Jones, enquiringly, "his—?"

"War-paint," reiterated the other, "his best Sunday-go-to-meeting coat, you know."

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Jones, relieved; "all the medals you told me about, the honourable distinctions that he won by his deeds of gallantry during the Indian Mutiny?"

"Just so," said the Honourable Bob, hastily. He was not anxious for the guest of the evening to go into the particulars, as by himself related, of the said deeds of valour before Captain Rowan of the Rifle Brigade. These little hasty servings-up of military incidents were better kept en famille.

"How will you like having a married C.O.?" said Rowan, scenting some recent mischief on the part of the "merry-man," and thinking it wise to turn on another subject of conversation.

"Oh, we should like the Chief any way—married or single; but I think too many married officers in a regiment spoil the mess, don't you know? And for that

reason, if for no other"—this with a comical glance at Rowan—"I shall certainly not follow the Chief's example."

The Honourable Bob's impecuniosity at the present time being well known to all concerned, and to many who were not, this resolute determination on his part certainly had its droll side. For awhile the stringed instruments were now silent, and the flute reposed in a state of great flaccidity, yet entire self-complacency, after his tremendous exertions, while a band of small drummer-boys sang part-songs in delightful cadence, their fresh young voices keeping admirable time and tune to the beat of the bandmaster's bâton.

This performance perfectly charmed Mr. Jones. He beamed upon the lads, and kept time with one hand falling softly on the other.

"If Colonel Eliot were here he would be pleased to see your appreciation of this part-singing," said Major Clutterbuck. "It is quite his hobby."

The Major was never in greater form than when he dined at mess on guest nights; never more expansive, more overflowing with the milk of human kindness, or on better terms with the whole world, himself included.

He had, on such occasions, a great, glad effulgence pervading his whole personality, that seemed actually to radiate light; and a stranger, meeting him for the first time, would return to his hotel or his quarters, as the case might be, deeply impressed, and conscious of a sensation as of one who had been basking in the sunshine.

Seeing that Mr. Jones was so taken with the singing of the little bandsmen, the Major wished to indulge his guest to the utmost.

"Can the boys sing 'The Men of Harlech,' Mr. Shaffenhauser?" he said, with graceful urbanity, to the bandmaster; "this gentleman is much interested in the part-singing."

A faint gesture on the part of Mr. Jones, suggestive of wishing to shake hands with the magnificent personage addressed, who was attired in faultless evening costume, was happily frustrated by the Honourable Bob, who slid his lank body in between the two, screwing his eye-glass into focus for the purpose of more minutely examining the music on the tall, slender stands.

"Ah, yes," he said, "'Men of Harlech'—wevy nice thing that—full of melodee and harmonnee, eh, Shaffenhauser?"

"It is zo," replied the German, bowing low, after the manner of his kind. "Ze boys have ze great gombiment from ze gentleman. I too have ze gombiment, and in my heart I feel it deep. We shall sing at wonce, ze 'Men of Harlech'—ta! ta! ta!"

This last to the boys, with three taps of the bâton on the edge of his own particular stand; and soon the fresh young voices rang out in that most stirring song, the while Mr. Jones was in a sort of ecstasy.

Major Clutterbuck never hurried his cattle; he was too discreet a general for that.

The end of all things was the whistle; but softly, softly—"qui va lento va sano." He stood there, tall and comely, his fine, white, even teeth just showing under the curve of his moustache, for he was smiling, was the Major, and enjoying the music; heart and soul in the thing, as any one could see with half an eye. He even went so far as to imitate Mr. Jones's example, beating time softly on the palm of one hand. He sat reclining in a low lounging-chair, his shapely legs crossed the one over the other, his neat, spurred boots pleasantly en évidence. Not one faintest sign of restlessness or impatience was to be seen in the man from the crown of his head to the tip of his toes; and yet in his heart he wearied for the moment when the serious business—the only business worth talking about—should begin.

Yet he lighted a second cigar with consummate deliberation and quietude. With him absolute self-control was part of his stock-in-trade. It was only on very rare occasions that the supply failed him.

Herr Shaffenhauser bowed till he bent himself double; the band-boys would have grinned their delight at Mr. Jones's praise of their performance if they had been civilians; but your sucking soldier makes no sign, and they presented "eyes front" and grave faces without a smirk among the lot, though inwardly they were bursting with pride and pleasure, which would presently find vent in much noise and vociferation. A drummer-boy is just as conscious of the stern hand of discipline for ever over him, as that dazling being, the drum-major, whose staff-of-office and other splendid ornaments, pompous carriage, and general air of condescension, make him appear something almost superhuman in the eyes of the crowd that gathers about the barrack-gates on marching-out days.

A faint mist of perfumed smoke from many cigars began to gather in the ante-room, and through the gentle haze shone the crimson and the gold, the purple of the R.A., the Lincoln green of the Rifles. The men scattered in groups, and as the music ceased and the band dispersed, the hum of voices rose higher and more clear. The windows were widely open, and the lovely Maltese night, with its gem-starred heavens, and its faint splash of oars in the distance, with its soft tinkle of fitful music, and chirp of cicada in the short crisp grass, with its swaying shadows of vine-leaves, and its radiance of silver moonshine, seemed part and parcel of the gay and happy time.

Sir Peyton Paling was seated in one of the inside balconies, with his heels on the rail, and a glass of soda-and-brandy on a low chair by his side. He had ceased asking people to dine with him, and relapsed into a slightly sentimental mood, being heard, indeed, to warble a stanza of "What is Home Without a Mother?" a tender question to which no one made any reply.

Seeing Major Clutterbuck saunter out to enjoy the calm and innocent moonlight, a thought struck him; he ceased to warble, and asked a question instead:

"I say, Clutterbuck, when is Miss Mabel Graham coming home again?"

Be it said that Sir Peyton, though not always sober, was, whether sober or not, always a gentleman. If the lady in question had been as royal in station as we know she was in Nature, he could not have asked after her with a more reverent and respectful air.

"We expect my step-daughter tomorrow, I am happy to say," replied the Major, genially. "I assure you, Sir Peyton, our simple home is like a world without sunshine when she is absent."

"A—h!" said Sir Peyton, with a sly, if not exactly sober, glance—almost a wink, in fact; "you don't find the boys make quite sunshine enough? Thought so; more like a storm—ah?" Then, being in that stage of hilarity which speaks out its mind regardless of consequences, he added: "Pack o' young imps, give you my word."

The Major was deaf for the nonce.

The Honourable Bob was in an ecstasy; he screwed his glass in hard, and looked beamingly from the one to the other.

Mr. Jones, on the contrary, felt as if he

were going round and round a lamp-post in a London fog.

He did not know that Major Clutterbuck had a step-daughter; he did not know that that gentleman owned a pack of young boys.

"You have not yet seen Miss Gwaham?" said the Honourable Bob, noticing the stranger seemed somewhat at a loss.

"No," said Mr. Jones. "I did not even know that Major Clutterbuck was a married man. Is, then, this Miss Graham—his step-daughter, did you not say?—is she so beautiful?"

The Honourable Bob blew the faint blue rings of smoke from his cigarette delicately into the air.

"She's all my fancy painted her; she's lovely, she's divine; we're all in love with her, to a man."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Jones. "And these young—"

"Boys!" said the Honourable Bob, sharply. "Why, they're the children of the second marriage."

"And not at school?"

"No; wish they were—wish they were anywhere. But, you see, there's no money to pay for the little beggars. Miss Graham teaches them—works like a slave, 'pon honour—fact!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Jones, again. "I hope I shall make the young lady's acquaintance."

"Sure to," said the Honourable Bob; "evewy one does, you know."

"Would you like a rubber?" said the Major, in easy, careless style, sauntering, or "sloping"—as Ginger put it—across the room.

"Dash it!" roared Sir Peyton from the balcony. "Clutterbuck, you beat the world, crush me if you don't! Any one would think you'd never handled a pack before. Come on, my neophyte, let us cut for partners."

Outside, the beauty of the night grew with each passing hour; the sky deeper, the stars clearer, the moon more bright and silvery. A tiny breeze uprose and crept over the surface of the sea like a refreshing spirit.

Inside, play waxed serious. The R.A. Colonel grew more and more apoplectic, his eyes bulged further out of his head, and he breathed hard. He had the cool Major for an opponent, and did not look upon the fact in the light of a blessing. On his part the Major was also seriously

considering the aspect of affairs. His fate nked with that of his guest, and the play f the City man was by no means what he ad expected it to be.

Business habits, it may be, engender alm calculation, accuracy and keenness of bservation ; be this, however, as it may, fr. Jones proved a most valuable ally. o far, so good ; but, the reverse would aturally hold good also. The Honourable ob, looking on, wore an expression of uch awful solemnity as might have ecome a meal of "funeral baked meats"; ure sign that he was inwardly in a state f the most unseemly hilarity ; indeed, one erious protesting gaze through the mmortal eye-glass sent that unfortunate inger out into the balcony with a rush, nd caused the Colonel in blue to mutter omething as to "unseemly frivolity."

When the meeting broke up, this otentate realised that he had had a run of ad luck—no man is ever worsted by the kill of his opponents, of course—and Major Clutterbuck, apparently in no wise lated by the good fortune which had fallen o his own share, set off towards the Porto Reale Gate—the 193rd were lying at Floriana—en route for the Quarantine steps. Mr. Jones sauntered on by his side, and he Major told him all about the house at Sleima, and asked him to come and call on Mrs. Clutterbuck at an early date. The ruth was, a new scheme had now entered he Major's mind, but of this his companion was naturally in ignorance.

"Shall I put you across?" said Mr. Jones, as the two neared the steep steps of stairs, and looked upon the calm and leeping bay—sleeping in the moonlight ike a child with a smile upon its face ; 'the fact is,' he added, a little shame- facedly, "I often go for a moonlit row hese lovely nights, you see—they are omething so new to me. I'm a common- place sort of chap, I know ; but I love such beauty as they can show, as romantically, I do indeed, as a boy of twenty who never sat on a high stool in a counting- house in his life ; so, you see, my fellows are always about until I send to dismiss them."

The Major was pleasingly conscious of a well-appointed, well-cushioned boat, with

Maltese oarsmen, pulling about in gentle idleness near the steps, and in a few moments the two men were seated under the gaily-striped awning, and the oars cut the water into silver shreds. Past Fort Manuel—its shadow dark and brooding on the water—over the bright bay ; on—on—smoothly gliding, till Sleima was reached ; and, even then, Mr. Jones insisted upon accompanying the Major to his own door.

The villa looked glorified and etherealised in the steady radiance of the moon that poured down on balcony and turret, tangle of vine, and blossom of oleander.

All was still, calm, beautiful ; but had some angel, weary with flight, lighted upon the edge of the topmost turret, from thence to watch the world of sea and sky ?

A tiny figure, all in white ; a shimmer of golden hair ; two little bare feet dangling against the grey stone ; a small, rapt face looking up into the starry sky

The Major stood still ; reeled where he stood.

"Great Heaven!" he cried, under his breath, "it is Phil. The turret stair—he has climbed up——"

The sweat beaded on the man's brow ; his voice faltered, failed, died away into a low, piteous sob.

Mr. Jones grasped him by the arm like a vice.

These short, square-built men are so strong. The Major was held to the spot as though in an iron clamp.

"Be calm, sir," said a low voice at his ear. "Show yourself a true soldier, as I know you are. If you startle the child, he will fall dead at our feet."

"Good Heaven—good Heaven! what shall I do?" groaned the miserable man ; "and my wife—my wife—sleeping there just below him—never thinking——"

But Phil was not afraid. Phil had seen his father, and was in high delight.

"Does you see where I be—daddy!" sang out the little voice from above, sweet and clear.

And then came the soft pat, pat of little palms one against the other.

Phil was applauding his own daring.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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Author of "*A Mist of Error*," "*Her Inheritance*," "*A Social Success*," "*Kitty's Victim*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

SEPTEMBER was over, and the first days of October had followed in its wake. It had been an autumn calculated to atone even for the many sins of the spring which had preceded it—hot, and bright, and settled, as the English climate very seldom allows itself to be; and such happy beings as knew no law with regard to their movements, except the law of their own inclinations, had been very slow in returning to London.

In the beginning of October, London had been, what is technically called, "empty," though such inferior districts as the City, and Oxford Street and its neighbourhood, had been thronged from morning till night with the insignificant working population of all ranks, whose holidays are not to be lengthened by any autumn sunshine. But somewhat to the unchristian satisfaction of this section of the public—to some ill-regulated constitutions it is distinctly trying to be obliged to work in London through holiday country weather—the middle of October brought with it a sudden change. The wind went into the north-east, the rain fell in a quiet, persistent, unobtrusive fashion, until it seemed to have become a confirmed habit with it to do so, and "society" fled back to its winter quarters, shivering and grumbling.

It was about half-past ten o'clock in the morning, and the outlook from the

Tyrrells' dining-room window was calculated to depress any one in whose scheme of daily life anything so elementary and barbaric as the weather had a place. The pavements were wet, the houses opposite were wet, sundry wet umbrellas passed with a resentful and depressed splash and patter; the rain came down with dreary monotony. But neither Miss Tyrrell nor her brother, as they faced one another at the breakfast-table, were at all affected by such trifling external circumstances. Tyrrell had remarked on entering the room that it was an abominable day, and had applied himself to a cursory study of the newspaper, and a more or less interested exchange of comments with his sister. Miss Tyrrell had observed that the room was cold; had rung for a servant to bring some logs of wood, and had contemplated her elaborate early English hearth with a perfect satisfaction in its artistic merits, and a vague consideration of the weather as being especially designed that such an eminently desirable factor in the arrangement of a room might have reason for existence.

They had returned to London only the day before—Miss Tyrrell in the afternoon, Tyrrell, from the Continent, late at night, and they had a good deal to say to one another over their breakfast, chiefly with reference to matters connected with their joint establishment and their joint society life during the ensuing winter. Of the past summer months they hardly spoke at all; they had each gone their own way, and neither cared sufficiently for the other to be interested or even curious on any matter which concerned only one. They would probably have made no allusion whatever to their recent individual proceedings—certainly it would have occurred

to neither to question the other—but for the fact that Miss Tyrrell, on her arrival the day before, had expected to find her brother well-established for the winter, instead of not yet arrived. John Tyrrell had delayed his return to town for at least ten days after the date he had originally fixed, a very unusual circumstance with him.

"You have not even had your letters sent on lately, I see," observed Miss Tyrrell as she rose, breakfast being over, and stood for a moment by the fire, preparatory to retiring to her writing-table, where she usually spent the first hour of the morning. "There is an appalling accumulation waiting for you in your room. You won't produce the new piece as soon as you intended, I suppose?"

"Possibly not," returned her brother, in a tone that was very hard, and did not invite further comment on his intentions. But Miss Tyrrell was reading the paper, and she did not notice the tone.

"Who have you been with lately?" she asked, absently.

Tyrrell did not apparently resent the question; on the contrary, he answered as though he was rather glad to be asked it.

"I've been alone," he said. "I got rather bored, and went off to rough it a bit in Greece by myself."

He came up to the fire-place as he spoke, and his sister raised her eyes carelessly from her newspaper.

"I don't think it has agreed with you," she said. "You are too thin, John. You've been rather foolish not to come back looking younger. Shall I send about those curtains?"

"As you like," returned her brother, without interest. "Well, I suppose I must go and read letters before I go down to the theatre."

He gathered up the letters brought him by that morning's post, and went down the passage into the little room where Selma had taken refuge after her first appearance as a reciter, seating himself at the writing-table, with hardly a glance round the room, though he had not been in it for nearly four months. His holiday, extended as it had been, had apparently done him no good. He was, as Miss Tyrrell had said, very thin; his eyes were rather hollow and very hard, and there was something about his uninterested manner as he arranged his table and sorted the letters to be read, which suggested, as his manner during his discussion as to

future arrangements with his sister during breakfast had suggested in a less degree, that the life to which he had returned was a matter of business and necessity only, that the capacity for interest was wanting in him, and that everything was flat. He was dull and apathetic, like a man who is suffering from reaction.

He opened his letters one after another, read them rapidly, and laid them aside with not the faintest change of posture or expression, until he came to the first of two addressed in the same, large, characteristic handwriting. It was very long, and he glanced through it rapidly, throwing it down at the end with a cynical curl of his lips, the normal expression of which had altered indefinitely for the worse in the course of the last three months, as had that of his whole face.

"Little fool!" he said to himself, with a whole world of contempt in his eyes. "Little fool!"

He took up the letter again and re-read a bit here and there, with a smile, which grew more cynical and contemptuous moment by moment; and just as he turned to the concluding words for the second time, the door opened, and Miss Tyrrell appeared.

"I am sorry to disturb you, John," she said; "but I want to know exactly what you wish about that new glass."

"Oh, as plain as possible," he answered, "with the monogram only. What do you think I have here, Sybilla?"

"Something interesting?"

"That's as you take it! A letter from Selma Malet to say that she is very sorry, but she's going to be married, and to ask if I will please get her contract cancelled!"

"John! Not really!"

"Really! There is a great deal about her new fancy, and about my forgiving her; but that's the gist of it. So much for women's careers! Little fool! You can read it."

Miss Tyrrell took the letter with an inarticulate murmur in which amazement, horror, and uncertainty as to what was expected of her—to which her brother's tone had given her no clue—were blended in equal parts. She had not read more than half when she lifted her head with an exclamation of pure astonishment.

"The idea of Selma's writing like this," she said. "It is simply the wildest infatuation I ever heard of."

"She will sacrifice her chance in life to it all the same."

"But can you do nothing to prevent it, John? The man is a mere nobody from what she says! Think of the splendid position she might have had! Think of all you have done to introduce her already!"

Tyrrell smiled half cynically, half grimly. "I've done a good deal more for her than that," he said. "By Jove, I've taken pains with that little idiot."

His sister hardly heard him; she was finishing the letter.

"Don't let her throw it all away, John," she said. "The silly girl might marry any one she likes in another year. Hold her to her contract at least, and let her see how domesticity with this colonial cousin strikes her after her first season!"

Tyrrell leant carelessly back in his chair, and looked with absolutely uninterested eyes idly before him.

"My dear Sybilla, why should I?" he said. "I don't care a jot whether she marries or not. Why should I trouble myself? There will be not the faintest trouble about cancelling her engagement, and there will be one fashionable actress the less, that's all."

"John, she would have been an artist!"

Tyrrell looked at his sister with a contemptuous curl of his lip.

"Yes," he said, after an instant's contemplation, "so she would—I had forgotten that!"

"I thought you were so much interested in her. I thought——"

Tyrrell moved as though the subject wearied him.

"A winning fight is always interesting," he said, "and it is worth while to help on the winner. If she does not choose to fight, it is entirely her own affair, and she ceases to be interesting."

There was a short pause, and Miss Tyrrell took refuge in the letter; she handed it back to him after a moment or two with her own hard little smile.

"It is dated August the thirtieth," she observed, "and she begs you to let her have a line of forgiveness by return of post. You have been rather hard on her! Ah, I see there is another letter from her. What is that about I wonder!"

Tyrrell took it up and opened it leisurely. It was dated a fortnight after the other, and it was a very short and pathetic appeal from Selma for a word of kindness from her oldest friend.

"Poor little fool!" was Tyrrell's comment, and "poor silly child," echoed

Miss Tyrrell as she read it over his shoulder.

"You'll write to her, of course," she added. "Give her my love—I can't congratulate her."

"I shan't write this morning," answered Tyrrell as he folded the letter, and put it with those which were not to be answered immediately; "if nothing else turns up I may go and see her this afternoon as the letters have been lying here so long. She's staying with his people I see." And he settled back again to his correspondence as Miss Tyrrell, with a parting lamentation over Selma's backsliding, departed to do her shopping.

Nothing else did "turn up" in the course of the day, and at about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, Tyrrell, having finished his business at the theatre—arranged for the reading of the new piece which had been waiting his return to town, and set on foot negotiation for a substitute for Selma, amongst other things—and having looked in at his club, was standing in the doorway of that institution smoking a cigarette with a general air about him of having no interest in anything, and of being utterly disinclined to make the effort necessary for the recovery of his old footing with himself or with his life.

"I must do something I suppose," he argued with himself. "Why can't I rouse up? I'll go and look up little Selma—that won't be any trouble, and it is a form of occupation."

Accordingly, half an hour later, the Cornishes' brisk little parlourmaid, with her eyes rather round, and her cheeks rather pink with awe, opened the drawing-room door, and announced:

"Mr. Tyrrell!"

There was very little light in the room, so late on that dreary October afternoon, but the dancing, uncertain light of the fire, and Tyrrell had not even distinguished who was or was not in the room before the maid's announcement was echoed in a glad, incoherent, impulsive cry, and Selma was standing before him with outstretched hands, and flushed, tremulous face.

"Oh, I'm so glad," she cried; "I thought—I thought—— Oh, I thought I'd been too ungrateful to be forgiven!"

"I have been out of town," he said. "I have had no letters forwarded to me, and I found both yours waiting for me this morning."

He spoke for the first time that day, as if he were interested in what he said,

quickly and gently. The ring of that fresh, sweet voice had roused him in spite of himself.

Selma uttered a little cry of relief and happiness as she looked up in his face in the dim light, letting her hands remain in his, as she said again:

"Oh, I am so glad! I have been so miserable, because you didn't write. Then you are not angry with me!"

"My dear child, why should I be angry?" There was an undercurrent of cynicism in his tone, but he did not say, "Why should I care?" with those soft hands clinging to his. "You know your own mind, of course, and it is for you to decide. Donne is angry," he added, with a smile. "But here is your release."

He drew a paper from his breast-pocket as he spoke, and as he gave it her the parlourmaid, rendered additionally zealous by her desire to look as much as possible upon the popular actor in "a common room"—as she expressed it downstairs—brought in the lamps. Selma only smiled her thanks to him; but as she did so, the light fell full upon her for the first time, and Tyrrell absolutely started. Standing there, half turned to go to her chair, with her face raised to his, half gratitude, half confusion, with her lips parted in a smile, and the new light in her eyes, which shone there always now that love was the background of her every thought, she was indescribably lovely. For the first time in her life Tyrrell saw her beauty not as an important factor among her chances of success, but as the beauty of womanhood. The delicate features, with their soft colouring, the perfect lips, with their undeveloped suggestion of power, the dark eyes, and the slender, graceful figure, struck him suddenly as though he saw them now for the first time, and he took the chair she indicated to him, with a little graceful gesture, in silence, hardly hearing the trivial words she spoke about the shortness of the October days.

"It is a wonderful developer," he was thinking, analytically. "Selma in love with a man is infinitely more beautiful than Selma in love with an ideal of Art!"

Then he roused himself to answer her; and though Selma did not notice it—her perceptions being otherwise occupied—though he himself was quite unconscious of it, that moment's silent realisation had brought a subtle change to his manner towards her. It would never be the

same again. It was no longer the manner of a master to his pupil, but of a man to a beautiful woman.

"I hope it has not given you much trouble," she said, lifting her lovely, confused eyes to his face, when they were alone again.

There was a little satirical twist about his mouth as he answered her. It struck him as being so like a woman to utter those futile, conventional words when she was recklessly throwing away her whole career, and when no trouble or inconvenience she might have occasioned to him, or to any one else, would have weighed one scruple with her.

"Not at all," he said. "It is a little late, but that is not your fault. And you have really given it all up?"

"Really," she answered, with an indescribable intonation, half-ashamed, half-glorious.

"And you are very happy?"

"I—I feel as if I had been asleep all my life, and had only just waked up."

A little pause followed the low-toned, impulsive words.

Selma's head was a little bent; there was a soft flush on her cheeks; her eyes were soft and dreamy; and Tyrrell, studying the girlish, innocent face, was in no hurry to disturb the picture she made. It was Selma herself who broke the silence. She seemed to put away her thoughts with a consciousness that it behoved her to make conversation, and, lifting her eyes to his face, she said:

"You are later than you expected in coming back to town, are you not? Have you been abroad? What have you been doing with yourself, Mr. Tyrrell?"

The clear, young eyes were looking straight into his as she asked the question, and Tyrrell rose. He walked to the fireplace as he answered her, and leaning one elbow on the mantelpiece, he took up a little ornament. He was looking at it and not at her, as he spoke:

"I've been in Greece," he said, rather shortly. "Tell me about your own summer."

She shook her head, and laughed softly.

"There's nothing more to tell," she said. I——"

She broke off suddenly.

Voices and footsteps were heard in the hall, and Selma started to her feet with crimson cheeks, and shy, expectant eyes.

"Oh!" she cried, "it's—— He's

coming! I did so want you to see him."

Tyrrell turned towards the door with a quick movement of curiosity, which vaguely surprised him. It opened, and Mrs. Cornish and her eldest daughter came in, followed by a young man he had never seen before. He shook hands with the two former, whose greetings were respectively rather stiff, and very shy, and then he turned to Selma, who was standing close to him, with one hand slipped into the young man's arm, her face lovelier than ever in its blushing, happy confusion.

"Roger," she said, "this is Mr. Tyrrell, my very oldest friend. Mr. Tyrrell, this is—Roger!"

Tyrrell held out his hand with a ready, courteous grace of gesture which expressed his sentiment of the moment as little as did his words.

"I am delighted to meet you," was what he said. What he thought, as he took in the manly, unintellectual face with contemptuous certainty of estimate, was: "A stupid, good fellow. How like a woman!"

"I have heard a great deal of you," returned Roger, as he shook hands heartily. "Selma," he turned to her as he said her name with a mixture of adoration and protection very pretty to see, "Selma has been so anxious to hear from you. May I ask if it's all right?"

"Of course you may," answered Tyrrell, with a smile which turned Selma's hot cheeks hotter still. Roger glanced at her with a proud acceptance of the right in her which Tyrrell's voice so gracefully allotted to him, and as she met his eyes with a shy, happy momentary glance, Tyrrell saw her face. There was a hardly perceptible pause, and then he went on, speaking rather mechanically:

"Yes, everything is settled as Miss Malet wished it."

"Miss Malet!" explained Selma, lifting her eyes from the carpet. "Mr. Tyrrell, what are you thinking of!"

He laughed a little constrainedly.

"I was not thinking at all," he said. "But perhaps the instinct was right. Perhaps it had better be Miss Malet."

"Mr. Tyrrell, what nonsense!" protested Selma. "I never heard such nonsense. Because—because I'm engaged! Roger, of course he must say Selma, mustn't he? I'm not different."

Tyrrell waived the question with a smile, and turned to Mrs. Cornish considerably annoyed with himself. What had possessed him to make such an ass of himself, he wondered? What did it matter to him how the girl looked at the fellow?

"I hope you had a pleasant time in Somersetshire," he said. "Thanks, no sugar," as she offered him a cup of tea, and he took a chair near her.

All the Cornishes were more or less in awe of Selma's distinguished friend, and Mrs. Cornish disliked and distrusted him as an authority in Selma's life against which no word of hers was of the faintest avail. He talked on smoothly and easily, and Sylvia shyly did her best to respond; but Mrs. Cornish was not in the habit of disguising her sentiments towards any one, and the conversation did not flourish. Neither Selma nor Roger, however, appeared to think it in need of any assistance from them, and after a little while Tyrrell rose to go. He said good-bye to Mrs. Cornish and Sylvia, then he turned to Selma.

"Good-bye," he said.

"Good-bye—who?" she answered, putting her hand behind her instead of giving it to him, and looking at him with eyes which were half-pleading and half-mischievous. "Good-bye, Selma!"

He looked at her for a moment, and then repeated, in a voice which was rather strange:

"Good-bye, Selma."

She gave him her hand instantly, with a little, satisfied laugh, and Roger opened the door for him, and followed him into the hall on his mother's "See Mr. Tyrrell out, Roger."

"I feel as if I owed you an apology," observed Roger, in his frank, straightforward way, as Tyrrell took up his hat. "I shall always have a guilty consciousness of having defrauded the public—of having stolen her."

Tyrrell responded to his cheery laugh with a perfectly courteous smile, while his eyes wandered to the young man's watch-chain, and seemed to harden slightly.

"You have stolen her whole heart, at any rate," he said. "I congratulate you. Thanks, I will find myself a hansom, it is not raining now. Good-bye."

They shook hands, and the next moment Tyrrell let his features set contemptuously as he walked away down the road, thinking

to himself: "An empty-headed colonial fellow like that! And she throws up everything for him!"

Roger, meanwhile having held the door open barely as long as civility demanded, shut it with speed and satisfaction, and returned post-haste to the drawing-room. Mrs. Cornish had left the room, and Selma was standing by the tea-table talking to Sylvia, and not knowing in the least what she was talking about, as her cousin told her, because she was listening for Roger to come back. The look she turned to him as she broke off in the middle of a sentence on his entrance, was sufficient to excuse the gesture with which he took her in his arms and kissed her, quite regardless of the presence of his sister.

"I nearly did it ten minutes ago," he declared, as she freed herself, laughing and blushing, only to nestle up against him quite undisguisedly, as she said:

"You behaved quite badly enough as it is. Why didn't you talk to my oldest friend?"

She leant her head back against his arm looking up at his face as she asked the question, and Sylvia contemplated the inevitable result with the sensation with which all the Cornish girls still contemplated such proceedings on Selma's part, until Roger's face was pushed away with caressing, insistent hands, and Selma lifted her head from his shoulder. She met Sylvia's wondering eyes and coloured crimson.

"Roger, dear, don't," she said, softly. "Sylvia—Sylvia's surprised!"

Sylvia could contain herself no longer.

"I am, Selma," she said, laughing, "I am! I can't believe my eyes sometimes. How often have I heard you laugh at the very idea of—falling in love with any man? Is it really the same Selma?"

Selma did not move away. She drew Roger's arm more closely round her, and lifted his other hand to her cheek.

"No, Sylvia," she said, "this is a new Selma—Roger's Selma!"

"And I think you might go and see after mother now, Sylvia," added Roger. "It's getting late!" and with another wondering laugh, Sylvia vanished.

The conversation after her departure was neither coherent nor particularly interesting for a few moments except to the parties immediately concerned. It was succeeded by a long silence as Selma let her head rest against his shoulder, while he held her hand pressed against his lips.

She moved at last, and gently drawing her hand away began to touch his hair with soft, caressing movements.

"How do you like my oldest friend!" she said, dreamily.

"He seems a good sort of fellow! I saw him look at this, Selma."

This was the little gold heart which Selma had lost in the wood. The mystery which had surrounded Roger's non-appearance on the sands at Blue Rocks had been solved, when it turned out that he had spent an hour in the wood searching for it. He had returned it to its owner when they were engaged, telling her that he had meant to keep it in remembrance of a dream; and she had told him, with a lovely smile, to keep it in remembrance of a reality—their first meeting. She touched it now tenderly and lingeringly.

"Poor Mr. Tyrrell!" she said; "I hope he wasn't hurt."

He captured the hand, and carried it to his lips again.

"Sweetheart," he said, "now that it is all over, and you've given it all up, I wonder—I wonder if you will ever be sorry."

His voice was very wistful, almost beseeching. She gave him all that a lover could ask; he might hold her in his arms, her love for him, sudden and rapid as had been its growth, was as undisguised as it was innocent and girlish; but always in his simple, honest soul there was a consciousness that she was in some way beyond him, that there were powers in her which he could only reverence or ignore, realms in her mind where he could never reign. Strong and capable as he was in all the other relations of life, in his worship of her he was uncertain as a child. He never doubted her love, he never doubted her faith, but he doubted himself.

Almost before he had uttered the last word, she drew his head down with a swift, impulsive movement, until her lips touched his cheek with soft, passionate kisses.

"Don't you understand?" she said. "Oh, Roger, don't you understand?"

EASTERTIDE IN ESSEX.

IN the "merry green wood"—it is neither very merry nor very green, this Eastertide, while winter still lurks in the nipping air—but, anyhow, in sheltered hol-

lows there is the warmth of the shy spring sunshine, the birds are chirping hopefully, and a pleasant indefinite savour from earth and trees spreads itself around. It is at Snaresbrook that one first feels the genial influences of spring. Descending from the little station there, with its wooden steps that lead through a perfect bower of evergreens, we seem to descend into an altogether different region of the earth from that just traversed. And what a traverse it has been! Birmingham or Manchester would have been more easily reached than this ancient forest of Essex by a dweller in the northern or western suburbs. Not one town only has to be crossed, but a dozen, with junctions which have to be practically effected by the pedestrian powers of the wayfarer. What struggles along interminable, windy platforms; what racing through darksome covered passages; what prolonged "waits" and short, spasmodic journeys, accompany this circular tour about London! On the other hand we make the acquaintance of many regions and many peoples. A crowd of different tribes seem to meet and jostle about Dalston Junction. Whole communities, with their own laws and customs, dwell around Homerton and Hackney. Now we are packed in the fashion of herrings in a barrel, in a huge train that is roaring away towards Poplar. Again we are whirled away in comparative ease and comfort in an almost microscopic local affair. Now we are among sludge and marshes, and again in the midst of a vast manufacturing district, which might have been transported bodily from the black country. In all the whirl of the holiday traffic, the individual is like a leaf, borne away on an irresistible living torrent, and as so many crushed and withered leaves, we are flung out at Snaresbrook, to the congenial society of the forest.

And here the change is an agreeable one. There is no frenzied rush to the forest this spring-time, anyhow, not to this part of it. People drive about in their little tax-carts. Every now and then a clump of men on wheels whirl past with outstretched necks; big men, at times, on little wheels, suggesting something like cruelty to machinery, and giving us the idea that the rider ought to get out and carry his steed up the hill. But it is pleasant to see the forest maintaining its position on one side of the road, while on the other is aligned the village street, with its esplanade of shops, facing the greenwood trees, in a contrast essentially

picturesque, although the shops are of the usual modern type. In the summer-time, when the trees are in full leafage, with sun and shade chequering the greensward, while on the shop side the awnings are out, and the belles of Snaresbrook and Wanstead are in evidence, with their carriages and horses drawn up in the shade, one can imagine the scene to be very bright and pleasant; with something of the old-fashioned grace of the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells, but not easily matched elsewhere in merry England. What with the appearance of forest trees unexpectedly at odd corners, with glimpses of woodland vistas between the houses and the old-fashioned, deep-red brick houses, roomily adapted for forest families, and the bits of greensward cropping up here and there with the old public-house at the corner, and the wide, grass-bordered roads which lead one knows not whither, with all this you begin to think kindly of Snaresbrook.

"But, bless you," says a well-disposed inhabitant, with an honest pride in his native village, "this ain't Snaresbrook; this yere's Wanstead."

Yet as to where Snaresbrook ends and Wanstead begins, as to the precise spot where any one can say "I have crossed the border, and am now in this or that," there is no general consensus of opinions. Even the local policeman is doubtful on the point, and is inclined to think that it is a matter for local option. If you choose to think yourself in Snaresbrook, well and good; or if you elect for Wanstead, equally well, if not better. In fact, the two communities, like many other of these forest settlements, melt insensibly into each other.

But, passing on, there is no doubt of Wanstead's rightful claim to the common, and field, and the hedgerows, and the big white church, which is so bare, ugly, and unassuming, that it invites a certain feeling of respect. The church stands almost isolated, on the edge, as it seems, of a flat green plateau, and you begin to wonder how it got there, so far away from the inhabited part of its parish, with only a few old stables or barns standing near. Yet these last have a certain air of dignity about them, perhaps derived from the fringing plantations that stretch out on either hand. For here we see the site of Wanstead House, or Palace, as it was sometimes called, a really magnificent abode, a rival to Canons, which Pope has made so famous, and, like that overgrown

mansion, in its eventual fate of utter destruction. There the grassy plateau stretches away in tiers, and terraces, and acres of flowers and parterres, all now so much grazing ground for cattle.

Yet there is little to regret in the disappearance of this great mansion, a huge unmeaning pile adorned with a great classic portico, in the heaviest style of a ponderous school; of which it was said, that it was absurd for a man with only sixty thousand a year to attempt to live in it. Far happier would it be to restore the earlier Tudor mansion, replaced by this massive barrack; a house which would have hardly been inferior in dignity and interest to old Kenilworth, for here the Earl of Leicester—Queen Elizabeth's brilliant favourite—had one of his chief seats. Over these now desolate terraces, broken here and there by the remains of vast cellars, and vaults, and ancient fountains, has swept many a brilliant and Royal train. The Queen herself would sometimes be Leicester's guest in the famous old mansion. And here the Earl was married to the shrewd Lettice, the hapless Earl of Essex's widow, in the presence of the bride's father, Sir Francis Knollys, and a distinguished company; the ceremony being performed by Mr. Tindall, the Earl's chaplain. There was to be no mistake this time, for the Earl had been noted for the dexterity with which he slipped out of the matrimonial noose, now by force, as in the case of luckless Amy Robsart, or again by fraud, as when Lady Sheffield was concerned. But this time the wily Earl was fixed, and Lettice won the spoils, for, on her lord's decease, hastened as scandal said by her provident care, she came in for this fine manor or lordship of Wanstead, and lived in the old house with her third husband, Sir Charles Blount. But all the furniture and belongings of the Earl had been sold, and the inventory is still in existence showing that my lord kept a fine stud of horses at his Essex house, some of which no doubt have descendants among the famous horses of modern times.

As for the house and lands of Wanstead, by some failure in the line of Blounts, they fell to the crown, and King James gave them to his favourite, "Steenie," Duke of Buckingham, who, having houses and lands galore, sold these to the Mildmays, descendants of that stout Elizabethan Statesman whose bones repose in Saint Bartholomew's—one of whom, gettin' mixed up

with the execution of Charles the First, was "forfeited," so it is said; but this point is not very clear. Anyhow, Sir Josiah Child bought the place, one of the earliest of our merchant princes, the author of a "New Discourse of Trade," published 1694, and the founder of the famous banking-house by Temple Bar. Sir Josiah's son married Dorothy Tylney, who brought to her husband the broad lands of the Tylneys of Rotherwick in Hants. With more wealth came greater honours, and the son of the City Knight was eventually created Earl Tylney, and he pulled down the old Tudor mansion, and raised a woeful load of masonry on Wanstead Hill. The Earldom became extinct in the year 1784, and the great estates passed to Sir James Tylney Long, whose father had married a daughter of the house. The succession eventually merged in an unlucky girl, the aim of contending fortune-hunters, who fell a prize to one of the worst and most worthless of them all, a certain Mr. Pole Wellealey, who acquired with his bride a fortune of sixty thousand a year, and who assumed the resounding name of Tylney Long Pole Wellealey. Amongst the gamblers and roués of the Regency this noble fortune was speedily dissipated, the contents of Wanstead House were dispersed in a famous sale by the renowned George Robins, and the unhappy, neglected wife died soon after almost in destitution. No one could be found rich enough to burden himself with such a white elephant in the way of a mansion, and Wanstead House was sold, and pulled down for building materials.

Now that we have seen all there is to be seen of the relics of this famous house, the park invites us, with its winding chain of pools, its spreading glades, its woods and thickets all at our disposal, for we London people have inherited the acres of the Long Pole Tylney firm, and this we owe to the munificence of the City Corporation, who have secured one more open space, which the advancing tide of bricks and mortar is bound to spare.

The way is down a pleasant, sandy lane, where the landscape breaks away in a series of low, wooded hills, with open country between, where the fresh green of the coming crop is mingled with the fresh brown of the newly-ploughed furrow. The twitting of the small birds is mingled with the confused cawing of rooks and rooklets from the adjoining plantation, while a couple of hawks, poised

high in the air, sweep over hill and plain, as if without an effort. And then the way lies through a birch grove, where as yet hardly a leaf has ventured to appear, although the coming buds give a rich golden tinge to the dark tracery overhead. And with that we come out upon the open glade, where the placid pools stretch out till they are lost to view in the furthest thicket. Boats are on the pool, and holiday-makers are paddling about in them. Here and there are little family groups, who have improvised some kind of game, to keep themselves warm, on the greenward. Other people seem to be only passing through; indeed, there is a gentle trickle of traffic all in one direction, the cause of which is perhaps indicated in the question of one of the passers-by:

"Say, guv'nor, is this the right track for the fair?"

The speaker is a jolly, buxom dame, who heads her little party with the air of the drum-major—her two girls, so easily amused, a couple of youths, in whom the shyness of the country bird is curiously mingled with the alertness of the London sparrow, and a husband, lean and sardonic-looking, who has drawn a little apart, as if in consequence of some domestic tiff, such as otherwise loving couples often indulge in on occasions of pleasure.

"Not that we're going to see the fair," continued the buxom dame, with a sudden access of melancholy. "We're a-goin' to see my 'usband's aunt in the 'Arrow Road. You don't want to see no fairs, do you now, Joseph?" addressing the sardonic man who held himself aloof.

Joseph replied, in an aggrieved way, that he didn't want to go messing about among any fairs; but that if he did go, he would not be taken in, like some people, who went to the fair with three half-crowns in their pockets, and come away with a penny egg-cup, a farthing cake o' gingerbread, and a halfpenny in current coin.

"Now, there was six coker-nuts as well, Joe. Be fair, if you can," rejoined the jolly wife of Wanstead, her face beaming once more.

So they all passed on their way. And by this time we are in sight of a pleasant chalet, almost surrounded by thickets, which bears the inscription, "Refreshments." And a pleasant thing must be a cup of tea on a summer's afternoon under the greenwood tree. But just

now the interior is preferable. At least, so a young couple seem to think, who have been wandering about the park arm-in-arm. He is stout, and weather-beaten, with a sailor's peaked cap, and bushy whiskers shaven clean away below a line marked out with geometric exactness; she a little dot of a thing, with a pretty little saucy face, as "pear" as you please, and the pair are evidently in the full enjoyment of those feelings of mutual proprietorship, which are characteristic of the early stages of married life.

"Well, Peter," begins the bride, looking round with admiring eyes at the stores of cakes and buns prepared for the general entertainment, "if it hadn't been for you I never should have thought of looking for such a place as this."

"I'm quite sure you wouldn't, Melinda," replied the swain, with modest pride; "and shows how thankful you ought to be as you've got somebody as can take care of you."

He is quite the preux chevalier, this swain from the Essex marshes, full of polite and obliging speeches and little flourishes in the way of gallant attentions.

"Only I wouldn't have tea, I think," suggests the little woman; "have ginger-beer. For why?" with an arch glance, "because I think we shall find the kettle boiling when we get home." And when Peter expresses polite incredulity, "But I made up the kitchen fire a' purpose," she rejoins triumphantly; and then, struck with a sudden doubt, "have you got the railway tickets safe, dear? Then give 'em to me to take care of. And, Peter, hold the umbrellas."

Peter takes the bundle, his wife's dainty gingham, and his own silver-topped stick, made of a narwhal's horn, or other expensive material, and evidently a family heirloom. But a gloomy doubt suggests itself to Peter.

"Melinda, where's the key?"

Melinda starts.

"Well, I never! How you frightened me! And I thought for the minute I'd left it behind. But here it is, and put it in your pocket; and don't fidget, there's a dear."

And the bride, half frightened at her own temerity, hides her glowing face in a frothing tumbler of ginger-beer.

Wandering about one meets with sundry other men and women of the East,

who seem to be endued with a greater amount of individuality and character than people one meets elsewhere, as if the space and freedom enjoyed among these woods and marshy plains had favoured the growth of a certain originality of life and conduct.

And now to follow the stream of wayfarers who are moving towards Wanstead Flats. First of all through a belt of primeval forest, intersected in all directions with paths and trackways. A stream finds its way, by a deeply-cut bed, spanned here and there by an original-looking wooden bridge, giving access to some queerly-constructed wooden houses. It is this stream, no doubt, penned up by artificial banks, that forms the chain of lakes in the Park. And here an opening reveals a set of swing boats in full career; and there is a family party all skipping over a long rope among the trees. And yet, as the evening shadows come on, there is a sense of loneliness: the dark avenues seem to be interminable, and the gaunt, bare trees, which stretch their arms overhead, mutter dolefully as the wind rustles among their branches.

Beyond the forest is a waste—a bare plain, with water-courses here and there, and shallow pools that catch the dying light. But from the edge of the plain there comes a sound of revelry by night. Then white tents of a great encampment can be dimly seen, with the glow of lights and fires.

It is an amazing assemblage, this fair on Wanstead Flats, which has sprung into existence, one hardly knows how, but which seems to be in some way a survival of the rough and boisterous festivities connected with the Epping Hunt, which was held on Easter Mondays time out of mind. Anyhow, here is a fair which might jostle it with old Bartholomew's or Greenwich, or that more neighbouring fair which was held under the Fairlop oak as long as the forest of Hainault existed, by Barking side.

Here are booths spread over the flats, with a street between them a quarter of a mile long, interspersed with swings and roundabouts of every conceivable structure, while every form of cocoa-nut or other "shies"—and their name is legion—with shooting-galleries of every form and pattern, occupy the vacant spaces. An enclosed square contains the more regular shows. There are theatric booths, a circus, dozens of minor shows, the booths

of half-a-dozen pugilists, whose deeds of valour, pictured on canvas outside, announce assaults-at-arms and terrific combats with the gloves; at least twenty mechanical orchestras, some driven by steam-power, bring out the most powerful clamour, while the shouts of the showmen, and of the swing and roundabout men, of those who hold the cock-shies against all comers, although scarcely heard individually above the din, while the world in general is shouting itself hoarse; all these sounds, mingled in one great uproar, give one the impression of "something like a fair." Withal, everything passes merrily and peaceably. The showmen seem among the most respectable of their kind, and the crowd that is gathered there is singularly free from the element of roughness. With faint reminiscences of the last days of Greenwich Fair, one would say that the manners and, it is to be hoped, even the morals of the pleasure-loving crowd are considerably improved within the past half century.

But there is one conspicuous instance of the evil influences of the fair and its temptations. Joseph has been caught in its meshes; he has forgotten all about his aunt in the 'Arrow Road. His whole family are about him as he stands in front of a well-lighted booth, with a heavy wooden ball poised in his hand. In front on a counter is spread a tempting display of all kinds of nicknacks. Vases for your chimney-piece, madam, toys for the children, pipes and pouches for your sweethearts, miss; tea sets for the soberly-disposed; pocket flasks for the gayer sections of the community; everything that can tempt the average fair goer is here displayed and everything for a penny, that is if you succeed in placing that heavy wooden ball within one of those square wooden compartments that are arranged on the other side of the counter. Joseph has promised his buxom wife the two big vases, the children are to have what they most fancy, and Joseph has set his heart upon a drinking cup. For a skilful bowler, for one who can put work into his balls, who can make them spin and twist, the feat of clearing the counter by a series of successful throws seems ridiculously easy, and he will do it yet, Joseph declares, in a fierce undertone, only he hasn't got into the hang of it. In the meantime he has broken into the second half-crown, and, as his wife pathetically remarks, with not as much as a penny egg-cup to show for it,

while his aunt is waiting tea, and the children's prospects for life endangered, while Joseph pursues his reckless career at the fair!

IN SEARCH OF OXYGEN.

So long as we have oxygen on earth and ozone in sea breezes on the shore, what can it matter to us, at present, whether there be oxygen in the sun, or not?

But it does matter very much to our far-off posterity, as you will see, if you kindly take the trouble to read what follows.

May I be excused at the outset for reminding those who have forgotten it, that the air we breathe is a mixture of gases, one of which, oxygen, is essential to life? In an atmosphere deprived of oxygen, no animated creature, as far as we know, can exist, although it is impossible for us to set limits to the resources of creative power.

Water is a combination of two gases, hydrogen and oxygen. Strange that the union of two gases, one of them, hydrogen, the lightest known, should form a rather heavy liquid.

In an atmosphere, therefore, which contains hydrogen only, and no oxygen, there can be no water, nor steam, nor aqueous vapour, nor cloud. Please note, by the way, the difference between the mixture of gases, as in the air, and their combination, as in water.

It is to the interest of the human race of the future, as well as of every living creature on earth, that there should be no oxygen in the sun. Monsieur Janssen has done his best to try if any could be found there.

As a means to that end, it was necessary to observe the sun at an altitude where the oxygen contained in our atmosphere should exert the least possible influence.

During his ascent to the Grands-Mulets he had observed that, the higher he went, the feebler were the groups of stripes in the spectrum which are caused by the action of atmospheric oxygen—clearly indicating that, at the limits of our atmosphere, those stripes would entirely disappear; and, consequently, that the sun's atmosphere had nothing to do with the phenomenon.

But as the Grands-Mulets stands at an altitude of only three-fifths of the total height of Mont Blanc, he had always

promised himself the completion of the observations taken there by a corroborative observation at the very summit. The difficulties, indeed, appeared insurmountable; nevertheless, there are few of them which cannot be overcome by a strong will and sufficient previous calculation.

An ascent made on foot was not to be thought of. Some appropriate vehicle—to be contrived—offered the observer the immense advantage of sparing him all bodily effort, and leaving his whole strength available for application to intellectual labour. This condition, it will be seen hereafter, is of inestimable value, when such lofty regions have to be visited for scientific purposes. The vehicle selected, then, was a sledge, which admitted the employment of any number of men to drag it, and deprived any of their falls or stumblings of the danger they might otherwise cause to the whole troop engaged.

The sledge, therefore, was made at home, at the Meudon Observatory. To it was added, by way of traces, a long rope ladder, with wooden staves, which could be fastened to the sledge, so giving the men greater facility for dragging the sledge in two single files, with complete ease and liberty in their movements.

But it was not enough to prepare the means and the mode of ascent; the agents had to be found and reckoned with. Now the business of Chamounix guides, as of guides in general, is merely to indicate the way to travellers; it is only at dangerous spots that they offer personal assistance. They had, therefore, to be persuaded to accept and co-operate with this new method of mountaineering. But, at last, after objections one side, and explanations on the other, a more than sufficient number of men were recruited.

The expedition, when completed, consisted of twenty-two guides, or porters, destined either to drag the sledge or to carry the instruments and the provisions. It left Chamounix at seven in the morning of Sunday, the seventeenth of August, sleeping at the Grands-Mulets, which they left at five on Monday morning, commencing there to make use of the sledge. It was a good opportunity for appreciating the merits and powers of the respective guides, and for selecting those who were to make the final ascent to the summit. At the Cabane des Bosses, a storm of wind came on, followed by a terrible night. The violence of the gusts was such that, while they were raging, the guides could

not go out without danger of being blown away, and heavy objects of considerable weight, which they had been obliged to leave outside, were lifted and carried off to the Grand Plateau. But finally the tempest ceased, and the weather promised to be fine again.

Monsieur Janssen had then only twelve men left, together with Frédéric Payot, whose age, and experience of Mont Blanc, marked him as their chief. The others, tired of their compulsory sojourn in the Cabane, and doubtful of ultimate success, had asked permission to descend, which was granted.

When the summit was finally reached, there was a grand explosion of affectionate joy amongst the band of Alpine brothers. The guides waved their flag, and Chamounix answered by the usual cannonade. The weather was admirable, the atmosphere so pure that one's eye could penetrate to the depths of the valleys. Hills, hollows, plains, cities, were coloured blue by the enormous thickness of the intervening atmosphere. In another direction was a world of glaciers, of riven peaks, of snowy deserts, of white precipices, dominated and pervaded by deadly silence. They suggested a scene which may be imagined to exist when the sun shall have cooled down, the earth grown old and inert, and inexorable frost and cold shall have extinguished all life upon its surface.

In the midst of such a scene, Spectroscopy was not forgotten. The party descended, a sledge and all, without accident. At the chalet of the Cascade du Dard, Monsieur Janssen was met by his wife and daughter. At seven in the evening they were in Chamounix, where they offered their guides "un punch d'honneur," a complimentary punch, thanking them for their devotion, and congratulating each other on the success of an enterprise attempted under such novel conditions.

To sum up the outcome of this Alpine excursion: The spectroscopic observations made during his ascent to the summit of Mont Blanc, complete and confirm those which Monsieur Janssen commenced, two years ago, at the Station of the Grand-Mulets, at an altitude of three thousand and fifty metres, or a trifle more than ten thousand feet. And the combined results of these and all other observations coincide in admitting the absence of oxygen from those gaseous envelopes of the sun which surmount the photosphere—at least of oxygen capable of exerting on light the

same influence and phenomena which it produces in our atmosphere, and which are shown in the solar spectrum obtained at low altitudes by the systems of stripes and bands with which we are well acquainted. This may be accepted as a fact of which we can feel definitely assured.

From this verity we are enabled to draw certain conclusions touching the constitution of the solar atmosphere.

It is indisputable that if oxygen existed therein simultaneously with hydrogen, the effect of the sun's ulterior cooling down—in an enormously long period of time which we are still unable to estimate, but which seems necessarily destined to occur when our great central luminary shall have begun to exhaust the immense reserve force and energy which it still retains—should the oxygen and the hydrogen meet, would be their combination, and the formation of water.

Steam or watery vapour would thus be produced in the sun's gaseous envelope; and such vapour, after what we know of its properties, would act as a screen partially intercepting radiation from the sun. It would prove a considerable obstacle to the emission of the heat-giving rays more especially. Thus the weakening of the solar radiation would be still further hastened by the formation of watery vapour. Clouds, in short, would ultimately obscure the sun.

May we not here recognise one more new harmony, in the admirable arrangements which tend to assure to our great central fire the longest possible duration of the functions on which depends the life of the whole planetary system?

Monsieur Janssen, on whose narrative this article is entirely based, gives several curious details respecting his physiological condition during his week's stay on the flanks of Mont Blanc, near the summit, and on the summit itself; that is to say, at altitudes from three thousand to four thousand eight hundred metres, or from nine thousand eight hundred and forty to fifteen thousand seven hundred and forty-four feet.

He is the first person, he believes, who ever reached the summit of Mont Blanc without having to make any bodily effort, and, what is very remarkable, it seems that he is also the only one who, under the same circumstances, has retained full possession of his intellectual faculties.

This noteworthy result, valuable on account of the indications which it gives to

observers who have to remain for a while in elevated stations, seems entirely attributable to the absence of physical exertion on his part during the whole of this expedition.

It is very improbable that he could have escaped the unpleasant sensations, so constantly felt at lofty altitudes, through any special disposition of temperament or peculiar idiosyncrasy. That supposition, indeed, can hardly be maintained; because whenever, in former ascents, he had to make bodily efforts, he experienced the uneasy feelings, alight it is true, but constant, of which Alpinists, on mounting to lofty regions, are accustomed to complain.

Two years ago, while ascending to the Grands-Mulets, during which he had to make great personal efforts, he felt the effect of mountain-sickness throughout the whole of the following day; and, what is very strange, when he tried to reflect on his observations and pursue a continuous line of thought, he experienced a sudden mental weakness with a tendency to fainting and syncope. It was only by making very frequent inspirations that he could bring himself right again; and he even acquired the habit of breathing very rapidly before setting himself to work to think.

This fact clearly shows that intellectual acts, as well as bodily efforts, demand an expenditure of force and, notably, the presence of oxygen in the blood. Now, the higher we mount in the atmosphere, the thinner and the rarer is the air we have to breathe. Consequently, a cubic yard of air on the top of Mont Blanc contains considerably less oxygen than a cubic yard of air in valleys below. Hence the efficacy of making frequent inspirations at great altitudes above the level of the sea. This last ascent was accompanied by no inconvenience of the above-mentioned kind. He spent four days in the Cabane des Bosses, and all the while never once felt a moment's mountain-sickness.

But he dared not undertake the least bodily exertion; for, immediately he did so, it would be followed by want of breath; and, by persisting, would doubtless bring on the sufferings usual at lofty stations. Neither did he experience the least uneasiness at the very summit of Mont Blanc, and he retained full possession of his mental faculties. All he felt was a slight excitement, the natural result of satisfaction at having surmounted every difficulty of the ascent.

The conclusion from his observations seems to be that intellectual work is by no means impossible on lofty summits, on the condition of abstaining from all bodily labour. The whole of one's strength must be reserved for the outlay occasioned by the exercise of thought. Elevated stations have become more and more obligatory for the study of atmospheric phenomena, for terrestrial physics, and for astronomy itself, so that it is of the highest interest to know that observers can there enjoy possession of all their faculties, by simply resolving to conform to certain determinate conditions of life.

It is obvious, then, that Monsieur Janssen should believe it of the greatest importance for physical astronomy, for the physics of the globe, for meteorology, and also for the giving of meteorological warnings and announcements, that an observatory be built on the summit, or, at least, close to the summit, of Mont Blanc. Of course, to this project will be objected the difficulty of raising such a solid structure on so lofty a mountain-top, which cannot be reached without great hardship, and where such violent storms so frequently prevail.

The difficulties are undoubtedly real, but by no means insurmountable. That opinion was arrived at during the ascent of Mont Blanc, and from researches especially directed to that object, which cannot be fully discussed at present. It is sufficient to remark that, with the means now at the disposal of engineers, and, moreover, with mountaineers like those who inhabit Chamounix and the neighbouring valleys, the problem will be resolved whenever its solution is decided upon.

For gentlemen to occupy the observatory, when built, it is certain that scientific enthusiasts will not be found wanting.

POURQUOIPAS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"BUT, madame, I do not understand you!"

"It is a mystery!"

"A mystery!" Mr. Fletcher felt that the word inadequately described the situation. "Do you mean to say—I hardly know whether to take you seriously—that you have been having a conversation with—a horse?"

"That is to say, with my husband—with Ernest."

"I thought you said that he was dead?"

"It is certain. Did I not see him die? I will show you the bed upon which we laid him out. Did I not shed upon his corpse my tears? What would you have?"

"Then how about the conversation?"

"It is metempsychosis."

Mr. Fletcher began to be amused.

"Metempsychosis?"

"It is a theory of which I know but little. Is it an article of faith with which Monsieur is acquainted?"

"Not much—personally."

"I? I am Catholic. Ernest? He was I know not what! These men! Never shall I forget my feelings when—when I suggested sending for a priest; he said that it was not worth while to trouble the good man, for when he died his soul would pass into a horse."

"A horse?"

"A horse! He even named the horse! It is incredible!"

Mr. Fletcher thought it was—almost.

"Monsieur must know that my husband—he is dead! what does it matter!—was not to me a good husband. I did my best to bring him to a sense of what was right, of what was proper; but, after all, it is little that a wife can do, is it not so? He had his little fortune, I had mine. Puff! before I knew it, his was gone. Do not ask me how. He would have sent mine with it; I said no. He was a great horseman. He used to keep horses to run at races, and to sell—that was his business; the hotel was mine—and among them was the famous Pourquoipas—all the world has heard of Pourquoipas."

All the world might have done. Mr. Fletcher had not. He said so.

"Monsieur has not heard of Pourquoipas! It is extraordinary! He is the greatest trotting horse in the world. It is little I know of these things; but I do know that Pourquoipas is indeed a marvel. He was my horse, as indeed, when you have the truth, were all the others. Judge then of my surprise when, as I told Monsieur, I said to Ernest, 'Shall I send for the priest?' he replied, 'Of what use? When I die my soul will pass into Pourquoipas.' 'What nonsense are you talking?' I demanded. 'Agnes,' he said, 'you have often accused me of having no religion. I have a religion. I believe in the doctrine of

metempsychosis.' 'What horror is that!' I cried. 'It is the doctrine of transmigration of souls. I am now about to die. I believe that when I am dead my soul will pass into the body of Pourquoipas. It is as I say. Those who live longest will see most.' He looked at me with his glassy eyes. He turned over on his side. Before I knew it he was dead. Those were nice last words for a wife to hear from a husband as he was entering the grave.

"I say nothing to any one. I was too much ashamed. The day before yesterday he was buried. Yesterday morning I entered the stable to see that all was well. I was looking at Pourquoipas. I was wondering what I should do with him. He is entered for half-a-dozen races—and what do I know of racing?—and suddenly Pourquoipas turned and looked at me. 'Agnes,' he said, 'good day.' Monsieur, it was my husband's voice. I fell to the ground. They found me in a fit. They carried me to the house. Oh, mon Dieu!"

The lady applied her handkerchief to her eyes. Apparently she wept.

"Don't you think it possible," suggested Mr. Fletcher, mildly, "that you were the victim of a delusion?"

"Possible. When I returned to consciousness, I said to myself, 'It is sure! I am no fool—I!' The more I thought of it, the more I said to myself it was a trick my fancy played me. Last night when I went to bed this idea was clearly presented to my mind."

Madame Peltier paused. She glanced round the room with what was very like a glance of apprehension.

"Monsieur, last night I had no doubt upon the matter. This morning I found, pinned to my pillow, a piece of paper, on which were written the words, 'Come to the stable.' They were in my husband's handwriting. I have the piece of paper in my pocket."

She rummaged in a pocket, which seemed as remarkable for the variety of its contents as any schoolboy's could possibly have been. Finally she produced a scrap of paper. This she placed upon the table with a flourish which was essentially dramatic.

"There it is. Monsieur may see it for himself."

It was a quarter-sheet of dirty note-paper, on which was written, in a cramped French handwriting, the words, "Come to the stable."

"It is my husband's handwriting; there

are a hundred persons who can swear to it. I said, 'It is another trick.' But, in spite of myself, I went to the stable. Scarcely had I put my foot inside the door, than Pourquoipas looked round to me, with this remark: 'You see, my wife, it is as I said.'

"Did you have another fit?"

"Would that I had! It was not all he said, not by a great deal. He advised me to commit suicide."

"In order to join him in the bosom of Pourquoipas?"

"Not actually; but in effect. He desired, the vagabond! that I should ruin myself. He said that I was to send all the horses, and a sum of money—ah! what a sum!—to an address at Morlaix. I was to ask no questions as to their destination. I was to dismiss them from my mind as though they had never been."

Mr. Fletcher rose from his seat.

"You don't mean that he said all that?"

"It is the truth. All the horses and ten thousand francs—all to be sent to a man at Morlaix, of whom I had never heard. It would be my ruin. As well commit suicide at once."

"This gets interesting."

"He said that if I did not do it, he would haunt me by day and by night. He would make my life a burden. He would make me wish that I was never born."

"Seriously, madame, are you quite sure that you were not again the victim of your own imagination?"

"I have no imagination; I know not what it is. When I hear a thing, I hear a thing; and when I hear my husband's voice I know it. Monsieur may rest assured of that. Besides, there is the paper."

There was the paper. But Mr. Fletcher did not see that there was much in that.

Oddly enough, he had been routing out materials for an article on Breton superstitions, when he stumbled on this find at Plestin. He had not been in the place half-a-dozen hours, when the landlady of his hotel, "La Boule d'Or," thrust on him her confidence. She said—he had never had such an accusation hurled at him before—that Monsieur looked "so sympathetic."

On the shore he found the stables. They were built within a stone's throw of the sea. Outwardly, they had not the

appearance of a typical training-stable—of a training-stable, that is, as it is known in England. A lank, knock-kneed individual was lounging in front of the door, who was the typical English jockey as he is found in fifth-rate racing establishments in "foreign parts." Him Mr. Fletcher accosted.

"Got some decent horses, I hear."

The "jockey" looked him up and down.

"They've got four legs—most on 'em."

Mr. Fletcher knew that the speaker had already read his inmost soul, and was aware that his equine knowledge extended no further than the capability of being able to draw a distinction between a horse and an ass.

"Four good legs some of them, I understand."

"About as good as yours and mine."

Mr. Fletcher felt that this language, in one in the position of the speaker, was out of place.

"Can I have a peep at them?"

"There's no law agin it, as I knows on."

The stable door was open. Mr. Fletcher entered. The jockey slouched in after him. The arrangements were primitive, but the building was of considerable size, and some eight or nine animals were in the boxes.

"Which is Pourquoipas?"

"That is Pourquoipas." On Mr. Fletcher moving towards the animal indicated, the jockey was moved to further eloquence. "He is a 'orse, he is." Pause. "He is a 'orse." Another pause. "There ain't no trotter like him, not in Europe there ain't. I ought to know." Pause. "And I says so." Pause. "That 'orse can do his mile inside of two-eleven." The speaker glanced at Mr. Fletcher, as if challenging contradiction. But as that gentleman was unaware of there being anything remarkable in a horse "doing his mile inside of two-eleven," his countenance was blank. "Yes, and inside of two-ten, if he's fairly on the job."

Again a look in the nature of a challenge. Still no reply. In possible disgust the jockey did what Mr. Fletcher was hoping he would do—he turned on his heels and left the stable. He seemed to see nothing surprising in leaving a perfect stranger to examine the stud at his leisure.

Mr. Fletcher was content, however, to confine his attention to one member of the stud—to Pourquoipas.

"So you're Pourquoipas, are you? I don't know much about the genus trotting

horse; but if you're a fair example of the rest of your tribe, you're not a handsome family. Big, gawky-leggy brute! You look to me more like a cart-horse gone wrong than any other kind of quadruped I've seen!" Pourquoipas looked round with sullen eyes, as though he resented these observations of a too candid critic.

"A nice sort of man the late Peltier must have been to have wished to transfer his soul to such a thing of beauty as yourself."

The creature made a movement with his hind legs, which caused Mr. Fletcher to nimbly step aside.

"Now, then, whose toes are you trying to step upon? A pretty mean sort of scamp your master must have been."

There ensued an interval of silence. Mr. Fletcher stared at the horse, and the horse at him. It was a stare, perhaps, of mutual admiration.

"Fat English pig!"

It was these words, spoken in French, which broke that interval of silence. Mr. Fletcher started back in so much haste as to come into sudden, and unexpected contact with the stable wall—it seemed that this flattering address proceeded from Pourquoipas! For some seconds he gazed at the animal with an astonishment which was altogether unequivocal.

"I'm not surprised that it frightened the woman! The thing was uncommonly well done. Now, my ventriloquial friend, where are you?"

Echo answered, where. Mr. Fletcher treated Pourquoipas with very little ceremony. He drove him from side to side of his box, so that no corner of it was hidden. He peered into his manger; he routed among the straw; he looked up at the ceiling; he examined the other boxes—there was nothing there but horses. He returned to stare at Pourquoipas; and the more he stared the more the wonder grew.

"Blockhead."

The same voice; and again it seemed to proceed from Pourquoipas.

"So there was something in it after all. I thought the woman was romancing. Well, this is something new in travellers' tales. I wonder, my friend, just where you are?"

While he wondered the voice went on:

"You think, you English, that you are wise. Bah! You are a nation of fools! Go back to your land of fogs; there you will be more at home than here."

"Is that all?" asked Mr. Fletcher, when the voice was still.

It seemed that it was. All efforts on his part to provoke a continuation of the conversation proved futile. His language was not exactly choice; his allusions were not entirely civil; but nothing he could say had any effect upon the quadruped, or upon the gentleman behind the scenes who had endowed the quadruped, per tem, with the faculty of speech.

"If the séance is concluded, I suppose I'd better go."

As he left the stable he told himself:

"Unless I am mistaken, our friend the jockey has a finger in this pie."

When he got into the open air the first thing he saw was the jockey, walking beside a horse which a lad was exercising on the sands a good three-quarters of a mile away.

Later on, Mr. Fletcher, having returned to the hotel for dinner, noticed, above the mantelpiece of the *salle-à-manger*, the picture of a man. The portrait was in oils, and life-size. The man was leaning over a table, staring the spectator in the face. It was in the modern style of French sensation—the man seemed actually alive! but, in its way, it was distinctly a work of art. Mr. Fletcher asked the Breton maid, who brought in his soup, who the original was?

"It is the patron—the husband of Madame. It is a good likeness; a very good likeness. But, for me, I do not like it. Whenever I look at it I think that he is going to leap at me across the table."

The idea was not inapt; he did look as though he were about to spring.

"Wasn't he a little man?"

"But a dwarf. That is how he was so good a rider."

The face in the picture was not an evil face. It seemed to Mr. Fletcher that it was rather the face of a fool than a knave. But about the whole portrait there was a curious appearance of life—one momentarily expected the man to spring.

That night Mr. Fletcher was aroused from his first sleep by a tapping at his bedroom door. At first—as we are apt to do—he wondered what it was that had disturbed his slumber. Tap, tap, tap! As he listened, there came a further tapping at the panel of the door. He started up in bed.

"Who's there?"

"Open, monsieur, for the love of Heaven."

It was a woman's voice.

"Is that you, madame?"

"Open, monsieur. I pray you, open."

"What's the matter?"

Slipping into a pair of trousers, Mr. Fletcher went to see. Outside the door was Madame Peltier in a costume of the most amazing scantiness.

She had a lighted candle in her hand. Without waiting for an invitation, pushing past the gentleman, she entered his room. Putting her candle on the table, herself she placed upon a chair. Mr. Fletcher felt that this behaviour of his landlady's required an explanation, even in the wilds of Côtés du Nord!

"May I ask, madame, what is wrong?"

Now that she had gained admittance, the lady appeared to be in a state of speechless agitation; it was plain that there was something wrong.

"Ernest!" she gasped. "Ernest! I have seen him."

"Ernest?" For a moment the name conveyed no significance to Mr. Fletcher's bewildered brain. "You mean your husband?"

"My husband! I have seen his ghost!"

"His ghost?"

Mr. Fletcher was becoming conscious that there might be more excitement in the country than the town.

"I have seen his ghost; oh, mon Dieu! I was asleep. Suddenly I woke. Some one was leaning over me, having a tight hold upon my arm. It was Ernest. Oh, mon Dieu!"

"You were dreaming."

"Dreaming! I wish I had been dreaming. Is that a dream?" The lady pulled up the sleeve of her single garment. An ugly bruise showed on the skin of her plump, white arm. "Ernest was a little man, but he had a wrist like steel. That is where he gripped me. Is that a dream?"

"How do you know it was your husband?"

"Do I not know my own husband? He whispered in my ear—oh, the horror! 'You see, my wife, it is as I said.' I was too frightened to speak. 'I will haunt you by day and night, until you do my bidding.' Then he began again about the horses and the ten thousand francs which I am to send to Monsieur Quelquechose at Morlaix—just as I heard it, every word, from Pourquoipas. It will be my ruin!"

While the lady sobbed, Mr. Fletcher,

in his unstockinged feet, paced to and fro.

"It strikes me that there is some plot on foot to deprive you of your property. Do you know anything about that jockey of yours?"

"Sam Tucker! He is a fool, and a knave. What then?"

"Do you think him capable of originating an elaborate scheme of robbery?"

"He is capable of anything; he is always robbing me. What has that to do with my husband?"

"That, at present, is more than I can tell you. Of course, the ghostly visitation was a trick."

"Is that a trick?"

The lady pointed to the bruise upon her arm.

"That is part of the trick. But I will talk the matter over with you in the morning, and we will see what can be done. You had better return to your room. You are hardly likely to receive another visit from that very versatile husband of yours to-night."

"I would not return to my room—not for ten thousand horses and a million francs!"

"Then you had better go to your maid. I suppose that you hardly propose remaining here!"

The lady went to her maid. Immediately on her departure, the gentleman turned into bed. But he could not sleep; he turned, and tossed, and tumbled; the lady's visit had banished slumber. Pourquoipas, the words which had fallen—or which had seemed to fall—from the creature's lips, the lady's story—half-a-dozen things were jumbled together in his mind.

Perhaps some twenty minutes or half an hour had elapsed since the lady had gone. He was lying on his left side, with his face turned towards the wall. His eyes were closed, in the forlorn hope that sleep would come upon them unawares. But as he lay, and no sleep came, and, instead, phantoms of thought persisted in chasing each other across his brain, in weariness of spirit, he opened them to look out upon the world. As he did so, he was surprised to see that a light—a faint light—was shining on the wall. His first impression was, that it was later than he had imagined, and that the first glimmerings of daylight were finding their way into the room. Something, however, in the colour of the light suggested that it

certainly was not daylight. And, as he lay in a sort of drowsy stupor, his eyes still fixed on the dimly-illuminated wall, he began to fear that that absurd woman had returned, to outrage the proprieties, and to seek shelter from her fears.

"Confound her! If this isn't something like an hotel, I never knew one yet! Talk about travellers being taken in and done for!"

This he muttered beneath his breath. Then he turned lazily in bed, intending, with as much politeness as circumstances would permit, to call down execrations on his hostess. But he did not call down execrations on his hostess, because his hostess was not there.

When he turned in bed he perceived that the room was lighted; but from what source there was no evidence to show. The light was, so to speak, just enough to cast the room in shadow; just enough to make things visible, and yet not plain. It was a dim and a ghostly light.

While Mr. Fletcher was wondering to what unseen friend he was indebted for this genteel illumination, all at once his eyes fell upon a man who was standing on the other side of the table, leaning over the board. He could have sworn that he was not there when he first had turned, a second ago, for his glance had travelled all round the room, in search of his landlady, and he had seen that it was empty. Yet it was equally certain that now the man was there, unless, that is, he was the victim of an hallucination. When one is awake and in one's right mind, one does not, as a general rule, see things which are non-existent; and now he saw that man.

He was a very little man, if that was any consolation, and he was a curious-looking little man. As he leaned across the table, his attitude conveyed an odd and slightly-uncanny impression of his being about to spring. There was silence. The visitor made no remark. Mr. Fletcher, on his part, made none. The man was a stranger to him, and yet—where had he seen him before? Suddenly he remembered—in the picture over the mantelpiece in the *salle-à-manger*. He was the patron, the husband of Madame! Either the artist had caught, in a marvellous and prophetic manner, his sitter's pose, or, the sitter had caught the artist's inspiration. Mr. Fletcher saw the picture reproduced before his eyes, as in the portrait—the little man looked as though he were going to leap at him across the table!

"Monsieur, a little of your attention."

The visitor opened the ball of conversation—the voice was the voice which had seemed to proceed from *Pourquoipas*.

"You are an Englishman! Very good. Confine yourself to your own affairs. Return to your own country."

The visitor's manner was distinctly acid. As he listened, Mr. Fletcher became very certain that the man in front of him was neither a spectre of his own imagination, nor a visitant from shadowland.

"You hear? I say, return to your own country."

Mr. Fletcher heard, and, as he heard, he sat up in bed and contemplated the speaker at his leisure.

"You're a nice young man, upon my word!"

This form of reply appeared to take the visitor aback. He seemed to think that he had not created a sufficient impression.

"You do not know who I am?"

"Oh, yes, I do—thanks."

"You think I am alive?"

"I don't think you are."

"Very good. Try and see." The speaker raised his hand, with a little mocking gesture. "But I warn you to take care. Above all, I warn you not to meddle in affairs which are no concern of yours. Go away from here, or—you will regret it."

"I assure you, honestly, that I shall not regret it, if remaining here will afford me an opportunity of having frequent interviews with you. You are the sort of man, I should say, who improves upon acquaintance."

"You laugh at me? Well, you will not laugh long! I warn you to go away from here before to-morrow night, or you will be sorry."

"Sorry? Not at all! You little brute!"

As Mr. Fletcher uttered this last exclamation, springing out of bed, he bounded towards the little man behind the table. He moved with great agility; but if he expected to take the other by surprise, he failed. No sooner did his feet touch the floor than the mysterious light vanished, and, despite his haste, all that he succeeded in doing was to come in violent contact with the table.

Some strongish language escaped his lips, as, in the pitchy darkness, he went rushing round the table. He succeeded in reaching the other side of it; he also

succeeded, when he reached it, in finding nothing there.

"Where are you, you hound!"

No voice replied. He stood a moment, listening. There was not a sound.

"I know you're somewhere in the room. Only wait until I lay my hands on you!"

Even as he spoke some one laid a hand on him, lightly, on his arm. And a voice—a well-known voice—observed:

"Good night, dear friend—until to-morrow!"

Mr. Fletcher sprang round with an agility which was really marvellous, grasping wildly at the speaker. He grasped, however, nothing but the air. When he realised that there was nothing there to grasp, Mr. Fletcher's language was quite unprintable. At last, he lit the candle. By its glimmer he examined the room—there was nothing but the room to examine. All traces of his visitor had disappeared. Nor could he find anything which went to show the means by which that disappearance had been effected. The door was locked, so was the window.

"Where has the little beggar gone? It strikes me that this is quite a model thing in hotels. It dates from before the flood, and I'll stake a pound it's honeycombed with sliding doors and secret passages, like the hotels used to be in the good old-fashioned tales of my boyhood."

As he came to this conclusion he returned to the table behind which the little man had stood. His eyes fell upon a piece of paper which was lying in its centre.

"What is that? I didn't notice anything there when I lit the candle."

It was a quarter-sheet of dirty note-paper—own brother to the scrap which Madame had shown him. It contained two words, written in the same cramped handwriting as the words upon her piece:

"Until to-morrow."

"That's odd. How came that there? There can be no doubt that the thing's well done."

He thought so, when, having put out the candle and returned into bed, on laying his head on the pillow, his cheek came into contact with another scrap of paper.

"What the ——!"

He sprang out of bed as though a serpent had stung him. With hands which actually trembled he once more caused light to shine upon the scene. He

bore the candle to the bed—sure enough there was a piece of paper on the pillow.

"How in thunder did that get there?"

As gingerly as though it were some precious—or, perhaps, some deadly—thing, he picked it up between his finger and his thumb. It was the third of the series—another dirty quarter-sheet. And on it, in the old, familiar hand, was this excellent advice: "Do not meddle with the affairs of others." The advice was excellent; there could be no doubt of that. But, still, Mr. Fletcher felt that its excellence did not sufficiently account for its presence on his pillow. This time, when he returned into bed, he did not put the candle out. He left it burning.

Sleep has been compared to a woman, "uncertain, coy, and hard to please." When we seek for slumber, it eludes us; when we least expect it, behold, it comes! It came to Mr. Fletcher then. Hardly was he once more between the sheets before he was sleeping softly as a child.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "*Louisa Draycott*," "*Geoffrey Stirling*," "*Aunt Hepsy's Foundling*," etc.

CHAPTER III. AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

"DO as I tell you . . . say what I tell you . . . it is the best chance," whispered Mr. Jones, still keeping his vice-like grasp upon the Major's arm; "say this: 'There is a gentleman here, Phil, who has brought you something pretty—come down and fetch it——'"

There can be no doubt that to assume authority is often to have it yielded to you. Major Clutterbuck obeyed the mandate of this stranger as unquestioningly as one of the men of the 193rd would have obeyed him.

In that tone that only comes from the habit of "giving the word"—the tone that is not a shout, and yet carries further than any shout—he spoke to the little, white, visionary figure far above their heads, seen so clearly in the flood of the silver moonlight.

Clear, high, mellow, full, the man's voice rang out into the night—rending it as one might rend a silken garment.

"Phil, my boy, there is a gentleman here who has brought you something very pretty—come down and fetch it——"

Not a pause, not a break, not a falter—until the message was wafted heavenwards; then, all being done that could be done, the two men instinctively grasped each other's hands—their hearts beating with the sickening thud that nothing but direst fear can cause.

There was a faint rustling from above—little bare feet stirring among the vine-leaves, and then—silence.

Major Clutterbuck sunk down upon the high coping by the house door. Mr. Jones, as if he had known the place for years—as if, indeed, it belonged to him for matter of that—turned the handle and pushed open the door.

There in the passage stood a little lamp which was always left alight when the Major was out, and sometimes burnt itself very low indeed, or even entirely away before the Major came in; while stepping gingerly down the wide, stone stair on which it shone, behold! King Baby—his little, white night-dress daintily lifted to be out of the way of his toes, as a lady lifts her gown; his dear, wee face all beaming, his eyes bright and big with anticipation, and full of a happy amaze.

"Who be you?" he began, looking with the frank fearlessness of an untamed creature at the stranger; but Phil caught sight of the cowering figure outside in the moonlight, and with one bound was at his father's knee. The Major caught and held him.

"My boy," he said, "my boy, you have frightened me very, very much——"

Phil slipped his arms about his father's neck, and put on his coaxiest face.

"Was you frightened 'cause I satted up there so high?" Then with a slow awe dawning in face and voice, "Pap, are you c'ying? I didn't fall, you knows."

"But you might have done——"

"Then I should have been dead—there would have been no me," this, with a deep sigh that heaved the bosom of the white night-shirt almost up to Phil's chin. The idea of a world in which there should be no King Baby was indeed a solemn one to face.

But the solemn fit passed; the golden head nestled against the scarlet of the mess-jacket.

"I do be berry tire—I do be goin' to put mineself to bed; but, Pap, what pitty sing has he got for me?" indicating with his finger the sturdy figure of Mr. Jones.

That gentleman pressed a small gold

coin into King Baby's pink palm, and closed the little fingers over it.

"Put that under your pillow, my fine fellow," said Mr. Jones.

"Pitty!" said Master Phil, and set off in a determined manner upstairs, lifting his gown as before, and clasping his treasure tight in the hand that was at liberty. It was not given to Phil to understand the intricacies of the coin of the realm; but, for all that, he was conscious that he was a richer King Baby than he had ever been before, and that great things might be accomplished at the toy-shop in the Strada Reale, by the aid of the capital at his command.

There could be no possible excuse for Mr. Jones following Master Phil up the stone stairs, and past the flickering lamp. It was an unwarrantable liberty to take in another man's house; but he had a notion of keeping the white-robed figure in view, and let himself be drifted on by impulse.

"Det awake, you boys!" cried the household monarch, pushing open a door on the first floor, and taking up his stand in the middle of a long, narrow room, in which four small white beds stood all a-row against the wall. "Det awake, this 'reckly minute, and see what I've dot for mine own very self!"

Like so many jack-in-the-boxes, up started three ghostly figures, while three ruffled heads became visible in the moonlight that streamed through the open jalousie.

"What's up?" said our old friend, Jim, rubbing his eyes.

"He giv'd it me," said King Baby, opening his closed hand and showing the palm where lay the sovereign bright and shining.

"Where have you been, Phil—what have you been doing?"

With this Jim, ever the leader of the rest, was out of bed in a jiffey, his bare feet planted well apart, his eyes fixed enquiringly, but not amazedly—Jim was never surprised at anything—upon Mr. Jones.

"Your name, please, air," he said, at last. "Are you Santa Claus? You look rather like it."

"No, I am not Santa Claus," said the stranger; "I am a friend of your father's, and I have brought little Phil back to his bed. He has been a very naughty boy, and frightened us all very much."

Phil muttered something about a "pigeon's nest," but no excuse would serve

him. Three little white figures now clustered about Mr. Jones to hear all about it, while Phil, becoming pleasingly interested in the recital of his own sins—as many older sinners than he have oft-times done—nestled against the narrator, and presented an appearance as far removed from penitence as it was possible to imagine. They say the rhinoceros is only vulnerable in the chinks of that coat of mail with which Nature has endowed him. Phil, also, was only to be hit hard in certain corners of his heart; otherwise he was a bold and fearless monarch; sans peur is not always sans reproche.

"Oh, Phil," said the eldest boy, and the "scramble" one, Bertie, given to be more thoughtful than his fellows, "what will Mabel say?"

In a moment all the starch melted out of King Baby. The curly head drooped, the round, soft chin touched the bosom of his night-dress. Sudden retreat is at times masterly, and shows a subtle appreciation of things.

"Wanah's to go to bed," said Master Phil; then, with little arms outstretched to Jones, of Seething Lane: "Lif me in."

The man bent and clasped the child, raising him tenderly, and laying him gently down in the smallest of the four beds by the window.

As he did so, a strange thrill passed through Mr. Jones; strange thoughts, soft as summer lightning, darted through his mind. There was no reason, there could be no reason why he, Amphlett Jones—he was called Amphlett after his mother's people—should not make a home for himself, as other men had done before him; no reason why he should not one day own such a treasure as that dear one, lying there among the pillows with his treasure-trove clasped close in his pretty hand, for his own.

"Are you going away now?" said Jim, all unabashed. "Well, look here, Mr. Jones, come and see us again, that's a good old sort."

Then he turned a somersault into his bed, and was seen no more.

But Bertie sat up straight, and looked wistfully at the stranger. He had dark eyes, like his mother's, and with something of their sadness, too. Bertie had reached that age at which it first begins to strike a boy that there are other people in the world beside himself. He was rising thirteen, and had begun to think. Sometimes he thought a good deal, curled up in

a certain nook in the old, vine-clad garden wall—a place where he could watch the geckos sleeping in the sun, himself in the shadow, and see the gold-green lizards letting on to be wrapped in dreamless slumber to deceive unwary flies.

Here, then, Bertie took to meditating over things—such things as why mother so often looked as if she had been crying; and why he so often saw the tears in Mabel's tender eyes as she kissed him good night.

"Something makes them sorry," thought Bertie; and then a fear—he could not have told you what fear—would make him feel as if he could not play at being Knights of Saint John with cardboard vizors, or even find delight in that marvel of the time, the model traction-engine that General McDougal, Jim's god-father, had brought him from Paris.

It seemed to Bertie that there was something in the face of Mr. Jones—this strange visitor who had appeared in their midst so unexpectedly, and who loomed dark and bulky in the moonlight, but with such kind eyes, and such a winning smile—to invite confidence. Bertie was not afraid to speak of what was in his heart to any one who looked like that—not a bit!

"I'm so sorry, sir," he said, wringing his long, thin, nervous hands the one in the other, "that Phil went out on to the roof like that; it will frighten mother so much. Mother is often frightened; I don't know quite why; and this will be the worst of all, the very, very worst. And there is Mabel—I really don't know"—this with an appealing look all round the room, as if in some corner or another might lurk a solution of the difficulties that beset him—"what Mabel will say. You know, she says that Phil is her 'heart's idol.' She calls him that when she cries over him at nights."

"Cries over him?" said Mr. Jones, going up nearer to the bed, and bending closer to the child.

"Yes," said Bertie, rather startled at being thus taken up so promptly, "not big crying, you know, like Jim when he pinches his finger in the traction-engine—only little tears."

"Snivelling, don't yer know," put in Jim, apparently rising from the bowels of the earth, and giving a ludicrous imitation of the Honourable Bob.

Then his native impudence got the upper hand.

"I say, Mr. Sir, you might give each of us one of those 'yellow boys' like you gave Phil; that is, if you don't mind. There's a deal of comfort to be got out of a little loose cash. That's what Pap says, you know. And we never have a penny amongst us—not a red cent." Then, some slight misgiving coming over Jim as to the exorbitance of his own demands, he added, raising one shoulder to his ear in his most coaxing form: "There's only four of us, you know, all told."

"When I was a little boy," said Mr. Jones, with totally unexpected gravity, "I used to be told that little boys should be seen and not heard."

"And was you seen and not heard?" cried Jim, deeply interested, and horribly ungrammatical at the same time.

"Jim," said Bertie, intuitively conscious that the discussion had reached a delicate point, "go to sleep. See, Phil is asleep already."

Yes, after all the perils he had gone through—perils he himself, poor little fellow! could so little appreciate, King Baby slept the sleep of the just, close clasped in his rosy fist the "yellow boy" which was supposed to contain all the elements of the truest comfort. Mr. Jones bent a moment over the sleeping child. All the latent fatherhood within him stirred and thrilled. What high ideal, he thought, might not a man well strive after, who could look upon such a jewel and call it his very own?

Then Mr. Jones went softly down the stairs, conscious of an ironically polite wave of a white night-gowned arm from Jim, and a gentle "good night" from Bertie.

"I have been putting little Phil to bed," he said, as he met the Major at the bottom of the stairs.

No surprise was expressed on either side at the fact of the visitor thus playing the part of amateur nursemaid; nor, indeed, was any felt.

Exceptional circumstances are like forcing-frames. Mushroom-like friendships and relationships spring up from them. Nothing seems strange, when unlooked-for and unexpected events knock time all out of joint.

Besides, Mr. Jones was beset by that strange feeling of which we are all of us conscious at times—the puzzling sensation of having gone through the same thing before. We may know this to be an absolute impossibility, and yet there the idea is—nay, we

can even forecast what will be said or done, startling ourselves with the accuracy of our own prophecies.

It was no amaze to Mr. Jones when Major Clutterbuck, still very white and shaky, took him by the arm and led him into the room on the right-hand side of the passage; no surprise to see there a faded-looking woman lying back upon a low couch, as though overcome by some powerful agitation; not much even when, as he was led to her side, she caught his hand and tried to raise it to her lips.

"But for you," she said, "but for you——" then she burst into a flood of tears, crying out that she was thankful she had not seen her darling sitting up there against the sky, with his golden hair shining in the moonlight. "I had thrown myself upon my bed; I was asleep; I did not know. Oh, Heaven, forgive me! why did I not keep a better watch? He might have passed my window like a white flash—hurled to death, almost at my feet, but for the mercy that sent you to save him."

Her streaming eyes were raised to the face of the stranger, the man whom she had never seen till that moment, and yet who seemed as her best and dearest friend. She was beside herself. Weary with vigil—for she was waiting up for her husband—this sudden shock was too much for her, and, then, the one who would have been her best support and stay was far away.

"I ought to be thankful, happy, glad—not like this, I know," she said, with a pitiful, wan smile at Mr. Jones, who really never had been in such straits in his life, for he was the most tender-hearted of men, and just now really at his wits' end; "but it came upon me so suddenly, the horror of it all, the child creeping about alone, and me asleep. I shall be quite different by to-morrow, shall I not, Desbrow!—quite a different person altogether."

"Yes, yes, my dear," said the Major, hurriedly, "certainly, my dear. I've been a good deal shaken and upset myself, a good deal, more or less; but with the rising sun I doubt not we shall both—'Behold, how brightly breaks the morning.' Are you musical, Mr. Jones, by any chance?"

Mr. Jones said that he loved listening to music; he could not imagine any one not being fond of music.

"Ah, well, I dare say we may get up some trios and things—when my daughter Mabel——"

"Yes, yes, that is what I felt," cried Mrs. Clutterbuck, breaking somewhat wildly into the conversation of the other two, "that is what I meant by being quite a different person to-morrow—Mabel, our own Mabel, is coming back to us to-morrow. She has been to Lucca with a friend, only for a few days, you know, we could not do without her for longer than that; but, she had not been well, and I thought the little change would do her good. I should not have been so foolish, should not have given way so to-night, if Mabel had been here——" Why it was like the sweet song of the chiff-chaff when the spring comes round—all on one note: "Mabel—Mabel—Mabel"; every one sung the same tune!

What must not this paragon be, that every heart turned to her as the sun-worshippers of old turned to their bright god in the sky?

What marvellous store of the strength and sweetness of womanhood must she not possess, since her mere presence would have been the source of calmness and endurance to others!

From wee Phil to the frightened, troubled mother, each and all turned to the thought of—Mabel—what she would think of King Baby's sad derelictions from the path of duty, how she would have comforted and consoled had she been there.

What a tribute were all these things to the absent one of the flock! As Mr. Jones thus pondered, his eyes lighted upon a sketch in water-colours, the sketch of a girl's head; not perhaps a work of very high art, but yet a thing which had a strange look of life about it. From beneath the ripples of nut-brown hair the soft eyes met yours with a confiding sweetness; the mouth—surely with a touch of sadness on it strange in one so young—was about—you could feel it—to part in a tremulous smile. A band of pearls round the throat, a few touches in flake-white suggesting the folds of some fleecy wrap, these were all; yet the picture—standing unframed upon a small easel just when the light from the lamp, now set high upon a bracket, fell full upon it—caught and held his gaze.

Mothers are quick to notice these things.

"That is Mabel," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, now rapidly recovering her usual self-control.

"It is very beautiful," said Mr. Jones, simply.

"My dear sir," said the Major—also more rapidly becoming himself again, with the old, genial, self-confident manner, and the old wave of the finely-formed hand—"it is very far from doing my step-daughter justice—very, very far from really giving you an idea of the charm, the grace, the beauty of Mabel Graham. You see, being only her step-father, I can venture to say more, to speak out more plainly, in fact, than I could if things were otherwise. As to that picture, Sir Peyton Paling said to me only the other day, 'Gad, Clutterbuck, it's well-intentioned; but—it's a libel!' Man of taste is Paling—knows a good thing when he sees it."

Mr. Jones thought within himself that assuredly the gentleman in question knew a good dinner when he saw it, and had a fine taste in wines; but, following the excellent advice bestowed upon Laertes by Polonius, gave his thoughts no tongue.

"I value the picture very much," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, gathering her shawl about her as though she felt the faint chill of the early morning hours. "It was done by a young fellow in the Engineers. No doubt it might be a greater work of art; but it has that living look about it that more artistic pictures sometimes lack." Mr. Jones thought that the "young fellow in the Engineers" was decidedly a person to be envied, since he must have studied the sweet face a good deal to be able to hit it off so well. "He was very fond of my girl," began the mother, with that air of gentle pride that mothers invariably don when they speak of those who have loved their daughters "not wisely but too well."

"I thought so," interrupted Mr. Jones. "And he found it easy to paint a face he knew off by heart."

Major Clutterbuck was betrayed into the rudeness of staring rather fixedly at his guest. It really was astonishing to hear Jones, of Seething Lane, talking like a three-volume novel!

There was more in the man than at first sight you would suppose; and—well, yes—a certain scheme which had already fitted through the Major's brain, took more tangible form and shape. Its outline was misty as yet, and another scheme was entangled up with it; but it grew more and more distinct. There was no saying what it might not develop into. Ah me! what a haunted chamber must have been that active, never-resting brain! How

many a scheme, there born, had there abortive died! The man's whole life had been a life of schemes; his feet trod daily a pathway formed of dead schemes trampled in the dust; the air about him was peopled with the ghosts of them; his memory was a graveyard where dead schemes filled all the graves, upon not one of which was written "Resurgam." His was the brightest, hopefulest nature. Each new idea which had for its aim and end the aggrandisement and enrichment of himself and his family—do him that justice, he never, even in fancy, separated himself from his family—was the best and most feasible he had ever evolved. Each risky investment—gold-mines, diamond-mines, coal-mines, and such like—was the one by which the fortunes of the Clutterbuck family were to be for ever reinstated upon a sound and firm basis.

He positively beamed upon Mr. Jones as certain possible developements of the sudden intimacy between them grew more and more distinct in the focus of his mind's eye. His emotion at sight of his boy's peril had been very real; his children were the passion of his life; but the peril was over, the emotion past; the Major was himself again; nay, a new and radiant edition of himself, bound in scarlet and gold.

Mrs. Clutterbuck was still tremulous, and all the sympathy of an honest heart was hers, as Amphlett Jones looked with pitying eyes upon her pale, worn cheeks, and the deep lines about her mouth.

"Major Clutterbuck would not let me go to Phil," she said; "he insisted upon me remaining here for a while, lest I should frighten the child with my nervous ways; but I may go now, Desbrow, may I not?"

There was something very touching to Mr. Jones in recognising the fact that she wished to make a sweet pretence of the Major being a most tenderly considerate husband; whereas, alas! rumour had already whispered to him that the patient endurance of the wife was a proverb among those who knew them. Few things, indeed, in life are more touching than those pretty conceits women use to cover the barrenness of the harvest that life and love has yielded to their eager, trembling hands.

"How am I to thank you?" said Mrs. Clutterbuck, as she rose from the couch, and held out her hand to their new friend.

"By saying as little as possible about my share in the matter," replied Mr. Jones. "I only did what any one else in my place would have done."

"If any one else had had the thought and the presence of mind," she answered, with a wan smile. "My hot-headed, impulsive husband, here, would have rushed upstairs, startled the child, and, oh!" she cried, shuddering, and hiding her eyes with her hand, as if to shut out some horrible sight.

"There, don't think about it," said Mr. Jones, patting her hand as if he had been the family doctor. "Never mind what might have been; little Phil is fast asleep in his bed long ago. He put up his arms to me and said, 'Lif me in;' and I did. No nursemaid, that had been at the work for years, could have laid him down half so tenderly as I—"

Then Mrs. Clutterbuck went slowly up the wide, stone stairs, turning at the top to smile down upon the man who had saved her from a terrible sorrow—for the Major was showing Mr. Jones out, and that gentleman would not hear of being accompanied to the steps where his "fellows" were waiting, gently splashing the moon-bright water with their idle cars to pass away the time.

They were glad to see the Ingless Signor, though, being paid in princely fashion for whatever service he required, they never grumbled a word at his long tarryings. In truth, they sang as the boat sped across the bay, passing Fort Manuel like a flash—sang a sweet, lilting love-song, much beloved of the Maltese nation, and many times and oft to be heard on land and sea, with a zither accompaniment or without it.

It has a sad, pathetic ring about it, this love-song of theirs; and, by some strange, mental process, for which Mr. Jones could not for the life of him have accounted, as he listened, the sweet face of Mabel Graham seemed to look at him through the silvery radiance of the moonlight, as through a silvery veil.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE than a month lay between the afternoon when Tyrrell made the acquaintance of Selma's future husband and the August evening, about a week after Jim's accident, when she had flung herself into Helen's arms, and, sobbing out an incoherent rhapsody of love and joy, had told her that she had promised to be Roger Cornish's wife. And that the spectacle of Selma in love was still an astounding one to her cousins was certainly no fault of Selma's.

During the week that passed between Jim's accident and the engagement, nobody could have failed to see what was coming; the only conjecture left to the excited conclaves who incessantly discussed the situation below their breaths, in all sorts of odd corners, was when it would "happen." The whole party had looked on—the majority suffering acutely from the necessity of repressing in public their almost irrepressible amusement and astonishment—at the sight of Selma as simply and hopelessly in love as a girl could be, restless or dreamy when he was absent, silent when he was present, blushing when he spoke to her, following him furtively with large, shy eyes, starting and trembling at the sound of his voice or his step, and generally conducting herself in the most orthodox and conventional manner. And the question finally asked and answered—how girlishly and sweetly no one but

Roger ever knew—her love was as unreserved as her perfect happiness, and as demonstrative. Jim had given it as his deliberate conviction that they were the "spooniest spoons going." Sylvia, Helen, and Nettie confided to one another that Selma never spoke or thought of any one but Roger. Her sister was less astonished than the other girls. Partly because she was herself engaged, and partly because, as she said, she had learnt never to be surprised at Selma, Helen took it altogether as a matter of course, and responded placidly to Mrs. Cornish, when that lady spent long mornings, in the absence of the engaged couple, in monologues of satisfaction. In her aunt's eyes Selma had at last become a satisfactory and understandable girl, and all her past incomprehensibility was forgiven and forgotten.

It was curious, but perhaps inevitable, that all the surprise of the Cornish family was concentrated on the fact that Selma should have fallen in love. They had never understood her artistic aspirations; her old scheme of life had been vague and unreal to them every one—with the exception of Humphrey, and Humphrey looked on with quiet, thoughtful eyes, and expressed no opinion—and they hardly realised what it meant that these had died suddenly and completely out of her heart. Every thought, every instinct she had known since thought or instinct had first stirred in her, was dominated and nullified by a new emotion. She had looked upon the stage as the means by which she was to devote herself to her ideal; now she thought of the stage no more. She had looked upon John Tyrrell as the arbitrator of her life; she only hoped vaguely now that he would not think her ungrateful. She had in her the fire of genius; it was quenched in a

spring tide of love. Her life was centred in one idea, and that idea was Roger.

Helen and Selma had come back to London to the Cornishes' house, not to their own. Mrs. Cornish had taken it for granted that it should be so, and neither girl had made any objection. Roger was trying to make arrangements which would enable him to settle in London; it was likely that he and Selma would be married immediately, and, until their plans were settled, it was useless to make any arrangements for the future.

It was fortunate that the interest which surrounded Selma as an engaged young lady did not wear off, and it was also fortunate that Humphrey and Helen were a most unexacting couple, since, as Jim expressed it, "Roger had nothing to do in London but spoon Selma; and Selma was always ready to be spooned." Jim himself had confided to Nettie, on going back to school, that he was in consequence "jolly glad to get out of the house"; but his sisters, fortunately, continued to be thrilled with excitement over the precaution necessary on entering any room where the lovers were suspected to be, over Selma's absent-mindedness and Roger's inattention, and their mutual oblivion of everything in the world but one another; and when, a few days after Tyrrell's call, Roger was obliged to go to Liverpool on business, all the resources of every member of the family were taxed to the utmost for Selma's consolation.

The week of his absence was almost gone; it was Friday morning, and on Saturday he was expected home, and Selma was moving about the morning-room, restless and excited, radiant with expectation. Sylvia was painting at a table near the window. Mrs. Cornish and Helen were working.

"My dear, don't you think the time would seem shorter if you did a little work?" suggested Mrs. Cornish, laughing, as Selma turned with a heavy sigh from a passing inspection of the clock.

"Do you think it would, auntie?" replied Selma, coming across the room, and kneeling aimlessly down in front of Mrs. Cornish, and smiling up at her with a frank impatience in her eyes which made her look like a little child. "There's all the morning, and all the afternoon, and all the evening, and——"

"I think I'd better take you to the Marriotts' to-night instead of Helen!"

Mrs. Cornish's voice was laughing; but

Helen took up her words eagerly, and said:

"Oh, auntie, what a good idea; I don't care about it a bit, and Selma would like it, wouldn't you, Selma?"

Selma let herself drop into a sitting position on the floor and considered the question.

"Is it a big party?" she asked.

"These parties are always big," put in Sylvia, lifting her head and contemplating her work critically. "He is the richest man on the Bench, father says, and they've a lovely house, and know lots of people. Mother, take Helen and Selma, and let me stop at home. Helen, come and look at this."

Helen put down her work, and rose, as she said:

"Sylvia, really and truly, I'd rather stop at home. It will be a nice quiet evening, you know. Oh, that's lovely."

The meditative figure on the floor, whose eyes had wandered back to the clock, turned at the exclamation.

"Show me," it observed, having apparently passed from a restless to an indolent stage of impatience.

Sylvia handed her the painting as she leant back on one hand, stretching out the other to receive it, and said:

"Will Humphrey be at home?"

"Yes," answered Helen, following the painting, and standing over Selma as she looked down at it.

Selma sighed heavily, and leant her head caressingly back against her sister, looking up at her with great, envious eyes.

"Oh, you happy Helen," she said. "Of course, you don't want to go to any party."

"And that being the case," responded Helen, brightly, "leave me at home, auntie, and take Sylvia and Selma."

"Would you like it, Selma?" asked Mrs. Cornish.

Selma put her head dubiously on one side, and contemplated the painting.

"Sweet, Sylvia!" she said, giving it to Helen to return to her cousin, as she went on, with unconcealed melancholy: "I'm afraid I shouldn't much, auntie. I should be wishing it were over all the time."

Helen and Sylvia laughed simultaneously.

"Oh, cheer up, Selma!" exclaimed the latter, gaily. "The longest lane, you know! You'd much better come, hadn't she, mother? It will help the evening through, at any rate."

Selma showed no desire to have the evening helped through, and for some time she refused to have anything to say to the idea. At last, however, the persuasions of Sylvia and Helen reduced her to saying that she would have gone if she had had a dress; and this excuse being scouted by both the other girls as utterly futile, she finally declared that she didn't care in the least how she dragged through the time, and it was settled for her by her sympathising advisers that she should do it in the vortex of dissipation.

All Selma's movements at this time sent a thrill of excitement through the Cornish household, and she had been out very little with her aunt and cousins. The Marriotts' party became quite an event in the eyes of the whole family as soon as it was known that she was going to it. Her dress was looked out, discussed, and touched up by Helen, with assistance from Sylvia and Nettie, tentative at first, since Selma in evening dress had been an awe-inspiring vision to them not so very long ago, and waxing enthusiastic at her careless, but to them most encouraging gratitude. And when the time came for her to dress, Selma, with one of her sudden changes of mood, seemed to have forgotten all her reluctance to go out, forgotten that she was merely dragging on a miserable existence until Roger should come back. She was in wild spirits, dancing about the room in various stages of undress, each of which seemed to make her more youthful and irresistible than the last, first with Helen, then with Sylvia, who was vainly trying to accomplish her own dressing with all speed, that she might assist in the adorning of her cousin, then with the much-excited Nettie, who was acting lady's-maid to her own intense satisfaction.

"Selma, one would think you'd never been to a party before," cried the latter, as Helen captured the graceful, dancing figure, and seated her by main force in a chair, preparatory to doing her hair for her.

"I never have, Nettie," returned Selma, gaily; "not since I was your age—not properly. I hated parties last spring; oh, you don't know how I hated them, and that's why I shall enjoy myself so to-night."

A chorus of "Selma, what do you mean?" greeted this declaration; and Helen added, peremptorily, "My dear, you really must keep still," to which admonition Selma replied with a kiss,

but which was without further practical result.

"It'll be so different, don't you see," she said. "I shall have nothing to do but enjoy myself, and I shall revel in it. Oh, thanks, Nettie!" as she took her dress from the girl's arm.

There was a few moments' breathless silence on the part of the three ladies-maids, while Selma kept up a running fire of comments, jokes, and thanks, and then the last touch was given, and Nettie broke out with:

"Oh, Selma, I never saw anything so lovely. Oh, isn't she beautiful!"

The dress was of soft, faint yellow silk, very simply made, with the long draperies which suited Selma's slender gracefulness so well, and the delicate yellow setting from which it rose seemed to give an added loveliness to the lovely, dark head. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes sparkling, and her lips were curved into a smile. Even Helen, to whom she was always perfection, thought that she had never seen her look sweeter, and she said, tenderly:

"What a pity Roger isn't going!"

The instant she had spoken the words, which had risen instinctively to her lips, she regretted them. The light died out of the beautiful, sensitive face suddenly and completely, the very colour faded, and Selma's lips trembled as she turned away from the glass without another glance.

"It doesn't matter how I look," she said, disconsolately. "I wonder why I'm going?"

She went downstairs sadly and silently, and nothing they could say, none of the admiring comments she received, could win a smile from her. She was depressed in proportion to her previous high spirits, and she moved and spoke when it was necessary, as though her thoughts were far away—as indeed they were—until she was aroused to the consciousness that she was standing in a brilliantly-lighted room, in a brilliantly-dressed crowd, by a man's voice at her elbow.

"How do you do, Mrs. Cornish?" it said. "What have I done that you cut me—Selma?"

She turned with a little cry of pleasure.

"Oh, Mr. Tyrrell," she said, "I never thought of seeing you! How very nice!"

His eyes rested for a moment on her face in its sudden glow of pleased surprise, and he said, rather mechanically:

"I did not know you knew the Marriotts."

"Uncle Dick"—began Selma; and then she broke off with a little laugh, which was more than half vexation. "Old Lady West is bearing down on me," she said, rapidly. "I shall have to talk to her. Oh, do manage to have a little talk to me by-and-by."

His smile of comprehension and assent had something rather strange about it, and he turned quickly, as Selma shook hands with an old lady evidently bent on congratulation, and, finding acquaintances almost at his elbow, was soon drawn on further into the crowd. Quite half the people in the room were known to him; every one who knew him was anxious to speak to him, and every one who spoke to him that night thought that John Tyrrell had come back after his holiday more delightful than ever. He had been talking, smiling, listening for nearly half an hour when Selma found him, it seemed to her by the merest chance, close beside her, as she stood talking to a mutual friend close to the entrance to the conservatory. A few minutes afterwards, the mutual friend, having drawn Tyrrell into the conversation, drifted away, and Selma said, quickly:

"This is delightful! Let us go to the conservatory and talk."

It was still comparatively early in the evening, and the conservatory was nearly empty; it was softly lighted with Japanese lamps, and among the tall palms and wonderful ferns were quaintly-made seats, with richly-coloured cushions. It was a charming picture as they entered, and Selma's graceful figure made it more charming still.

"Why are you not dancing?" Tyrrell asked, as the distant sounds of dance-music reached them as he stood for a moment beside the seat she had taken.

She lifted her eyes to him, and the colour rushed to her cheeks.

"Roger isn't here," she said, softly.

"I see."

Tyrrell had seated himself before he spoke, and there was another instant's pause before he went on, as he leant back in his seat and crossed his legs.

"And why isn't he here?"

"He is away," said Selma, turning her lovely, melancholy face towards him; "he has been away a week. Ah, you don't know how dreadful it has been! But he is coming back to-morrow."

"And when is it to be?"

"When—— Oh!" Selma's colour deepened, and her eyes dropped suddenly. She did not see the look on the face of the man beside her as he watched her, sitting quite motionless, in his easy, graceful attitude. "It—it depends on so many things," she said, after a moment, shyly and confidentially. "You see, Roger doesn't want to take me to New Zealand; he says I shouldn't like it; and there may be a good deal of trouble before he can settle down in London. But there's just a tiny chance that he might be able to arrange something in England at once—something very small, you know; and then—then——"

The sweet, young voice died away, and there was a moment's silence as she sat, a lovely picture of confusion, bending a little forward, playing with her fan as it lay on her knee.

"I see," he said again, mechanically, without moving his eyes.

Selma suddenly clasped her hands softly together, and went on, eagerly:

"You see, it would be a very little house, of course, and we should be rather poor; but we shouldn't mind that, either of us, a bit. That's what I tell him."

She was looking straight before her with earnest, childish eyes, and as she finished, she suddenly turned them upon him. Tyrrell moved slightly, but very suddenly, and his voice, as he spoke, had a new tone in it—the tone of a man who is feeling his way, though he spoke lightly, almost banteringly:

"There will be no more of this kind of thing," he said, with a slight gesture towards the brilliant crowd that passed and re-passed before the entrance to the conservatories. "Ah, there is Lady Dunstan. She asked Sybilla to bring you to her 'at home' next week; but that was in the capacity of young lion, not domestic mouse, of course." He paused, and bowed to the lady in question, and then went on: "This is almost your last appearance, I suppose, even in a private capacity?"

"Yes," she assented, brightly, "I suppose so."

"It seems hardly worth while to have made such a sensation for 'one night only,'" he observed, with a smile—the smile of open admiration and congratulation of an old friend, stretching out his hand for her fan as he spoke, and unfurling it carelessly.

Selma looked at him wonderingly.

"I don't understand," she said.

Tyrrell furled the fan with a swift turn of his wrist—he was one of the best fencers in London—and laughed as he said:

"If any other girl said such a thing as that to me, I should say that she was fishing for compliments, Miss Malet." Then, as she drew back a little, half-wondering, half-hurt, he added, quickly and gently: "Don't you understand that everybody is talking about you, Selma? Half the people in the room have been asking who you are, and I've seen half the people in the room introduced to you."

"Have you?" exclaimed Selma. "Yes, lots of people have been talking to me; but I didn't know you saw me. I thought you had lost sight of me altogether, and I was so afraid we shouldn't meet again."

Tyrrell passed over her words with a slight smile.

"Haven't you enjoyed it?" he asked, lightly. "Are you not the least bit sorry to give it up, to think that you will never set a whole room full of smart people staring and talking again?"

Selma laughed.

"Not the least little bit," she said. "Not the very least little bit."

There was a pause. Two or three couples strolled in from the dancing-room, and Tyrrell furled and unfurled the fan in his hands, gazing at it absently as he did so. Then the dance music began again—a dreamy, alluring waltz, and Selma's feet began to move restlessly. He looked at her and she laughed.

"It's such fascinating music," she said.

"It makes one long to dance."

He waited a moment, watching the girlish figure as it swayed slightly in time to the music, then he echoed her laugh, and said:

"There is only one way of taking up such a cue as that. My speech obviously is, 'Miss Malet, may I have the pleasure?'"

"Thank you, Mr. Tyrrell, I am not dancing to-night. That is the end of the scene, isn't it?"

She leant back in her chair with another light laugh, and held out her hand for her fan. But he retained it.

"I mean it," he said. "Would it be treason in you to dance this with such an old friend?"

Selma turned to him as though he had proposed that they should fly to the moon together.

"Dance with you, Mr. Tyrrell!" she exclaimed. "Why, you never dance!"

"That's no reason why I never should," he answered. "Come."

He rose as he spoke, and she followed his example, obeying him as she had obeyed him all her life.

"I've never danced with you in my life," she said. "It seems so funny."

He made her no answer, and she slipped her hand into his arm as he offered it her, and walked away with him. The dancing-room was very full, and as they stood a moment waiting to start, he said, as he looked down on her:

"What a successful frock! Why have I never seen it before?"

Selma smiled.

"You have," she said, "often!"

He put his arm round her, and they glided off into the stream as he replied:

"I don't remember it."

There were only a few turns left before the waltz came to an end, and Tyrrell talked lightly all the time about the party, the people, and anything that they suggested to him. Selma, after the first delight in her partner's perfect movement, gave herself up to wishing that he was Roger. But when it was over and he released her, the tone and manner of his "Thank you!" startled himself as it could not fail to have startled her if her thoughts had not been many miles away. John Tyrrell was not an accomplished actor and a man of the world for nothing, however, and as he took her back into the conservatory, and they walked up and down there while she fanned herself slowly, his voice and expression alike became again the voice and expression with which she was familiar.

"That was delicious," she said, recalling herself with an effort from her thoughts of Roger. "What perfect dance music!"

"It is," he asserted. "Let me fan you!" He took the fan from her in spite of her laughing protest, and began to move it slowly up and down; and then fixing his eyes on her face as his occupation gave him an excuse for doing, he said, carelessly, but with keen attention in his eyes: "Have you heard much music since you came back to town? Have you heard Moritz?"

Moritz was a young pianist who had made his first appearance in the London art world during the last season, and Selma had met him several times, and taken a sympathetic, girlish interest in her fellow débutant.

"No," she answered, eagerly. "What is he doing this season?"

"He is working splendidly," returned Tyrrell. "He seems to me to make a step forward in power and technique every time I hear him." He paused as Selma uttered a little, quick, enthusiastic exclamation of sympathy, and then went on, still with the same intent watch on her face: "Do you remember how angry he used to get with himself over those Volklieder? I heard him play them the other night to absolute perfection, and I told him so afterwards. He shook back that mane of his, his eyes lighted up—you know—and he said: 'Ah, I have done it! It is my own. I stand now upon his difficulties!'"

"Oh!" exclaimed Selma, "how lovely for him! How he must have worked. Do tell him I congratulate him."

The excited face and shining eyes were turned full towards him, and he studied them as he would have studied an open book, as he said, deliberately and slowly, in a lower tone than he had used yet, as though the subject were painful to him:

"He asked after you, and what you were doing. I told him that you had given up work, and he couldn't believe it. Ah," he added, with quick change of manner, "here is Miss Cornish looking for you, I'm afraid."

He did not look at Selma, but there was an instant's pause before she took her fan as he offered it to her, and he knew that her face had changed suddenly and completely. She hardly spoke as they rejoined Mrs. Cornish, and her face was still dreamy and thoughtful when Tyrrell shut the carriage door on them and turned away.

He went straight home, though it was so early, and had smoked two cigarettes before Miss Tyrrell, who had also been out, came in with an exclamation of surprise at seeing him.

"I told you it would be dull," she said, carelessly, as she unwound an artistically-arranged wrap from her artistically-arranged head. "Who was there?"

"Nobody," returned her brother. "Selma was the sensation."

"Selma Malet! I should not have thought of her being there. And how does the silly child like the idea of giving it up?"

Tyrrell smiled cynically.

"She has no ideas of any kind, at present," he said. "She is in love."

"And will it last?"

Her brother flicked the ashes from the top of his cigarette, and his face was more cynical than ever.

"Who knows!" he said.

CONCERNING CHIVALRY.

CHIVALRY went when the French Revolution broke out, according to Edmund Burke. Never, never more, he said, shall we see "that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom." But was the order of chivalry nothing more than a code of manners? Was it more or less than "that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness"?

The truth is that in these modern times we confuse the Order with the sentiment, and even, as regards the Order, we are too apt to regard it through the satirical spectacles of Cervantes. Yet as Don Quixote is the type of the extravagance, so also is Tennyson's King Arthur the type of the nobility of that "singular institution," as Robertson calls it, in which valour, courtesy, and religion were so strangely blended. Whether the institution of chivalry was the cause or the effect of the improvement in mediæval manners, remains an open question. It has been held, not without reason, that the knightly manners of the Middle Ages were, in a sense, compulsory. That is to say, that the general fierceness and rudeness compelled a counter-agent in the form of artificial gentleness, which found expression in ostentatious benevolence and exaggerated gallantry. In that case, the modern equivalent of mediæval chivalry has at least the superior merit of a natural basis.

Manners make the man in a more complete sense than they ever made the knight; and there are thousands of persons toiling in the dark places of the earth in a glorious, but far more effective, as well as self-sacrificing manner, than the knight-errants of old, who roamed about redressing human wrongs by rough, and far from discriminating, methods.

We all know, of course, the idealised chivalry of the Round Table, that glorious

company which was to serve as model for the mighty world, and be the fair beginning of a time which has never come, even yet.

A perfect knight must be a perfect gentleman—an ideal to which poor Don Quixote more nearly approached than those whose fame he revered. A Book of Chivalry has been described by Mr. A. J. Duffield, the translator of Don Quixote, as a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. But the absurdity of the mediæval romances is not necessarily in the mediæval institution. We must, in short, distinguish between literary chivalry and actual chivalry, although it is as well to remember that, had it not been for those "idiot tales," we should never have been enriched by the immortal history of the Knight of La Mancha.

It is curious, by the way, in recalling the desperate efforts of the Church in the time of Cervantes to counteract the Books of Chivalry, which had taken such hold of the popular mind, to compare the opinion of that famous teacher, and by no means narrow-minded man, Dr. Thomas Arnold. Writing to his friend, the Rev. Julius Hare—see Stanley's "Life"—he said :

"If I were called upon to name what spirit of evil predominantly deserved the name of Antichrist, I should name the spirit of chivalry, the more detestable for the very guise of the archangel ruined, which has made it so seductive to the most generous spirits; but to me so hateful, because it is in direct opposition to the impartial justice of the Gospel, and its comprehensive feelings of equal brotherhood, and because it so fostered a sense of honour rather than a sense of duty."

Yet if honour regulated conduct, how can the spirit of chivalry be "detestable," especially if Dr. Arnold's son were right in teaching that conduct is three-fourths of life? The "singular institution" has suffered on both hands, from indiscriminate blame as well as from indiscriminate praise.

We speak of chivalry as a mediæval institution, and also in connection with King Arthur. But Lingard says that chivalry originated in the eleventh century, and that it was already declining in the fourteenth may be inferred from a curious poem of that date, "The Tournament of Tottenham," in which chivalry is satirised. This agrees with Guizot, who, in his "History of Civilisation," places the real

time of chivalry in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, and its full decay in the fourteenth.

Authorities differ both as to the cause of decline and the date of death. Burke, as we have seen, assumes that it lived up to the French Revolution; Buckle says it was destroyed by Puritanism; Chevenix says it was killed by the progress of military arts; Mill's "History of Chivalry" says it was Frederic the Third of Germany who dealt it the first blow, by permitting common citizens to receive knighthood.

Carlyle apparently ascribes the decay of chivalry to the schoolmaster and the craftsman. "That tuneful chivalry, that high, cheerful devotion to the God-like in heaven, and to women, its emblems on earth; those crusades and vernal love-songs were the heroic doings of the world's youth, to which also a corresponding manhood succeeded. Poetic recognition is followed by scientific examination; the reign of Fancy, with its gay images, and graceful, capricious sports, has ended; and now Understanding, which, when reunited to poetry, will one day become Reason and a nobler Poetry, has to do its part. Meantime, while there is no such union, but a more and more widening controversy, prosaic discord, and the immusical sounds of labour and effort are alone audible."

Wherein it will be seen that Carlyle had a higher appreciation of mediæval chivalry than John Richard Green, who ridicules its picturesque mimicry of high sentiment, heroism, love, and courtesy—a mimicry before which all depth and reality of nobleness disappeared.

Some people have tried to find the prototype of the knight of chivalry in the knight, or eque, of Rome. But there was little similarity, and especially in the days of Imperial Rome was the position of woman much inferior to that assigned her in the Middle Ages. Moreover, the Roman eque had certain civil as well as military functions to perform, was stern and forbidding in his attitude, and was by no means fond of adventure for its own sake. The knight of chivalry existed by and for adventure, had no practical business, and lived in an atmosphere of sentiment and song. Perhaps he owes a great deal more to the Troubadours than to his own merit and prowess.

As Caxton, our first printer, was the first to publish a book about chivalry, it is natural to turn to him for some light on

its origin. In brief, it was this. Immediately after the creation of the world, he says, justice, and truth, and every virtue dwelt upon the earth; but they speedily yielded to their opposites, and for their recovery mankind was divided into companies of thousands. From these thousands was chosen a man, most loyal, most strong, and of most noble courage, and better "enseigned" and mannered than all the others. For him a beast was sought, and it was found that the horse was the most noble and the best to serve man. "After the horse—which is called Chyval in Frenche—is that man named Chyvaller, which is knight in English; thus to the most noble man was given the most noble beast."

This is so far true, that the word chivalry is derived from the French cheval, and was applied to the mounted part of the army—the cavalry—naturally the strongest arm in mediæval warfare. Knight, however, is a word of Anglo-Saxon origin—from cniht, a servant—afterwards applied only to those who rode after their lords. There is, again, the old German word, knetchen—meaning youths—which was applied to the sprigs of nobility who surrounded the great chiefs. These martial youths of Germany are referred to by Latin historians as "Juvenes." At what period the name of knight came to be applied exclusively to a particular class of soldiers, is not easy to determine. But there was an essential difference at first between the mere "ritter," or rider after his lord, and the chevalier, or chevaliero. This name appears in various forms, in the Italian, French, and Spanish romances; and it applied to one who was under an obligation for his tenure of land to furnish a horse for the service of his lord in the field. Thus, pace good Caxton, chevalirie, Anglicised into chivalry, really signified a tenement of land by military service. In time it came to mean a great deal more, just as knight came to mean something much nobler than a mere mounted manservant; but the real origin of chivalry as an Order was neither in Christianity nor in poetry, but in feudalism. Now feudal government implied social protection on the principle of mutual service. It was a system of hauteur towards equals, and arrogance towards inferiors, yet also of firm cohesive principles, which principles were superior to, and survived the system.

Chivalry, then, was an expression of

feudalism, as witnessed in the submissive obedience of the knight to his lord, and it was also disciplined by feudalism in the influence exercised by the noble ladies on the knightly retinue, and in the recognition and reward of military duties by the superior. Yet in feudalism there was a restraint, typified in the gloomy old castles, from which chivalry in time broke away, as the elements of romance and love of adventure began to flourish. Knights then banded themselves together, not for feudal service to one man, but for the service of humanity. Perhaps in chivalry—at all events in its highest and most ideal aspect—the philosophic mind may trace the germ of Positivism. Only we are not to suppose that chivalry and knight-errantry were always identical. The knight-errant professed to have a mission to set the world right, and to aid his suffering fellow-creatures; but his object was usually adventure, or plunder, or self-glorification—three things which true chivalry discouraged.

How far religion, and how far the restlessness of knight-errantry had to do with the Crusades, it is not easy now to determine, but it is as possible to regard the Mediæval Crusaders with some respect as the exponents of a coherent and definite scheme of chivalry, as it is impossible not to ridicule the poor, stilted, grotesque figures who pranced through Europe as knights-errant, seeking what they might devour. Richard Cœur de Lion used always to be held up as a model crusader, and Blondel, his friend or retainer, as a model of chivalrous devotion; but now we are told that Richard was a brutal tyrant, without a generous impulse, and Blondel another myth of the Middle Ages. Alas, the pity of it! If we are to sacrifice the romantic story of Richard and Blondel, shall we not also have to surrender much of our old strong belief in the beauty of the "singular institution," which has been so useful to generations of poets and romancists!

The Troubadours are regarded as post-singers who kept alive the spirit of chivalry, and who promoted the worship of it among people of all degrees. It is much more likely that they were the cause of its decay. It must have been excessively tiresome to have to listen, in season and out of season, to interminable doggerel about the beautiful dame imprisoned by the cruel baron in the gloomy castle guarded by giants and dragons under the

control of a fiendish magician; and about the courtly knight who overcame them all, and released the beautiful prisoner. The story might vary a little in detail—sometimes there were no giants and no magician, sometimes the baron was himself a necromancer, and so on—but the object was always the same, to extol the astonishing prowess of the gentlemen who walked into other people's castles and carried off their lady guests. It is to be feared they did not always treat their fair captives well—even Prince Geraint was very cruel to the gentle Enid after she became his wife; but the Troubadours, like our modern novelists, looked upon the romance of life as ended with marriage.

It was in the days of Edward the Third that chivalry is supposed to have reached its highest perfection in this country. The figures of the Black Prince, and that "Flower of Chivalry," Sir John Chandos, stand forth as bright and shining examples of what the peerless knight was or ought to have been. Only men do not swear by Froissart now as they used to do, and Green ridicules his pictures of chivalry as "picturesque mimicry." The Black Prince's chivalry, at any rate, did not prevent him from treating the people he conquered with all the savagery of a brutal nature.

The truth seems to be this, that chivalry was an ideal of perfection, of all that was noble and graceful and worthy in human nature, framed in accordance with the standards of the times. It never, at any period of its existence, realised the full worth and purity of the ideal; but then what form of society or code of manners does?

Even the ideal was lost long before Caxton published "The Book of the Order of Chivalry," with the object of stirring the gentlemen of his time to deeds of derring-do. "How many knights are there now in England," he asked, in 1484, "that have the use and exercise of a knight, that is to say, that he knoweth his horse and his horse him, ready to a point, to have all things that belongeth a knight, a horse that is according and broken after its kind, his armour and harness meet and fitting?"

"The exercises of chivalry are not used and honoured," he complains, "as they were in ancient time, when the noble acts of the knights of England that used chivalry were renowned through the uni-

versal world. O! ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry? What do ye now but go to the bains to play at dice? Leave this, leave it, and read the noble volumes of St. Graal, of Launcelot, of Tristram, of Galahad, of Perceval, of Gawain, and many more! There shall ye see manhood, courtesy, and gentleness."

But Caxton applied the spur in vain. Gunpowder had begun the work of destruction which the schoolmaster completed, and the Order of Chivalry was as dead as Cleopatra. Of course one does not forget Sir Philip Sidney, the chivalrous soldier, Spenser, the chivalrous poet, and Bayard, the chevalier without fear and without reproach. But you cannot construct an Order out of an occasional figure, or you must follow the Order of Chivalry to Khartoum, and bury it sorrowfully with the body of Charles Gordon.

The schoolmaster, as we say, completed the destruction begun by gunpowder—what room for knightly courage was there before a smoking tube, beyond the reach of sword and lance?—but there were other contributory causes. In this country the Wars of the Roses, and in France the Wars with the Huguenots, aided effectually in abolishing what remained of chivalry as an institution. Think for a moment what the Wars of the Roses cost this country. The slain during thirty years included some eighty-five thousand private soldiers of a generation in which the feudal instinct still survived in strength greater than was inherited by their children. But the death-roll also included two kings, one prince, ten dukes, two marquises, twenty earls, thirty lords, one hundred and thirty knights, and four hundred and fifty esquires. What aristocracy in the world could stand such a blow as that within a lifetime, without completely altering its character? It was reserved for James the First, however, to destroy the glory of knighthood by selling the "honour" to all who were willing and able to pay for it.

Puritanism, says Buckle, killed chivalry—which also is true to some extent. Yet it is needful to remember that the religious association and moral aspect of chivalry have always attracted religious teachers.

The Order of Chivalry died, covered with ridicule; and it probably never deserved much of the praise and glory it has received. But the spirit of chivalry exists, and is for all time—in spite of the

fears of Mr. Robert Buchanan. The fashion of its expression must change with time and manners, and we must not look for it in obsolete forms. It is no longer necessary for a man to show his reverence for woman by making an ass of himself, nor need he now ride abroad in search of human wrongs to redress. The work of the modern knight-errant lies at his own door; and surely there never was an age when the spirit of philanthropy was larger or more earnest than it is now. A knight, according to Caxton, ought to be charitable, and everything virtuous should adorn his character; he ought to be truthful, and to do nothing below the dignity of a gentleman. The same obligations exist now, when, as Hallam says, the character of a knight is represented in that of a gentleman. Certainly the position of woman is vastly superior in these later days, when chivalry is expressed in courtesy; and the position of the "masses" was never so good as now, when knight-errantry is represented by the social reformer.

POURQUOIPAS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

WHEN Mr. Fletcher awoke—there was no mistake about it this time—it was broad day. He lay for some moments revelling in the first joy of waking. When he thought of the events of the night, he laughed aloud; they were so utterly absurd. Remembering the scraps of paper, he sat up in bed to look for them. In rising, his glance fell upon his pillow. There, on the snowy linen, within half an inch of where his cheek had just been resting, branded, as it seemed, in blood, was the impress of a horse's hoof.

Mr. Fletcher managed, during the early portion of that day, to avoid his hostess. He went out into the village. There appeared to be only one shop in the place. At the door of that establishment stood a man. He was a big, burly fellow in blouse and sabots. He looked a companionable soul. Mr. Fletcher found him what he looked—a gossip. Mr. Fletcher began by alluding to the natural beauties of the neighbourhood. He then remarked that he was staying at "La Boule d'Or," the landlord of which, he understood, had lately died.

"It was time he did."

"Such a scamp, was he?"

"As honest a man as ever lived."

Mr. Fletcher pricked up his ears at this.

"Rather wild, wasn't he?"

"There never was a quieter soul."

"But wasn't he extravagant?"

"Extravagant! For example, he never had a sou to spend."

"That, I suppose, was after he had spent all he had to spend?"

"After!"

Monsieur Bonchard—the name was painted on the little window over his door—cast at Mr. Fletcher a contemplative glance. He placed his hands on the upper portion of his capacious stomach.

"I see."

"What do you see?"

"You have been listening to Madame Peltier."

"Madame Peltier certainly gave me to understand that he was not all a husband should have been."

"Marie!" Monsieur Bonchard called into the shop. A feminine reproduction of himself came towards the front.

"What sort of husband was Peltier, up at the 'Hôtel de la Boule d'Or'?"

"A model husband. A true model."

"As for his wife——"

The lady interposed.

"It is not for us to say anything."

"I was his friend; it is for me to say the truth. She murdered him!"

"Murdered him!"

Mr. Fletcher felt that the authorities were too conflicting.

"Not with a pistol and a knife, but with her cruelty. She led him the life of a dog! She did not let him have enough to eat; she would not let him have a sou to call his own; she would not let him have his liberty; she used to lock him up in a room for days; she beat him."

"Beat him!"

"Never shall I forget one night he came to me. He was crying—ah! like my little baby. 'Bonchard,' he said, 'it is finished. She has beaten me!'"

"With her shoe," explained the lady, "as though he were a little child."

"He was a very little man; she was a big woman; he was as nothing in her hands. She used to say she would show him as a dwarf. Ah, what he suffered! He had a spirit which was too large for his body. After that beating—Monsieur, he was black and blue, with my own eyes I saw the bruises!—within a week he was

no more—he was dead. That is why I say she murdered him.”

“One tale is good,” reflected Mr. Fletcher, “until another is told. The fault does not appear to have been all upon one side. If she beat him with her shoe—degradation not to be surpassed—I don’t wonder that he preferred the bosom of Pourquoipas.”

Corroboration of Monsieur Bonchard’s story was obtained from another quarter—from the Breton maid who waited upon him at his midday meal.

“What sort of man was the late Monsieur Peltier?”

“An angel.”

Mr. Fletcher felt that this was strong. The maid did not look as though she was an enthusiastic damsel. On the other hand still less did Monsieur Peltier—in his portrait—look as though he were an angel.

“What was there angelic about him?”

“He was so good; that was his fault—he was too good. He was a little man—such a little man—one could have nursed him like a baby.”

Mr. Fletcher was conscious that there might be drawbacks in being nursed like a baby.

“I suppose, then, that he and his wife lived happily together?”

“Happily! Ah, for example!” The damsel was standing by his chair. Stooping, she whispered in his ear: “Madame has a tongue!” Standing up, she looked about her, possibly to see if the coast was clear: “And Madame has an arm! You see that?” She pointed to a red mark upon her cheek. “She has just done it. She may be big, but I will let her know that next time she slaps me it shall not be for nothing.”

It was possible that the damsel’s evidence was prejudiced. When one has just been slapped, one does not, necessarily, have a high opinion of the slapper. Still, straws show which way the wind is blowing. It was evident that public opinion was not unanimous in reprobating Monsieur Peltier.

Mr. Fletcher did not see his hostess until after supper. He was quitting the *salle à manger* when he heard the sound of sobbing. The sound proceeded from a little room at the foot of the stairs. The door of the room was open. In it was Madame Peltier.

“Monsieur, I entreat you, enter.”

Mr. Fletcher entered.

“It is all over. It is done. It is finished.”

Mr. Fletcher inquired what was finished.

“I am ruined. It is of no consequence to any one—that I know very well—but it is all the world to me.”

Mr. Fletcher asked—being driven upon the paths of cross-examination—in what way she was ruined.

“I have just given orders that all my horses—Pourquoipas alone is worth five-and-twenty thousand francs—and all the money I have in the world are to be sent to a man in Morlaix, of whom I have not even heard the name.”

“You are not serious?”

“Do I look as though I were not serious, monsieur? What would you have? Ask Sam Tucker. He is going to take both the money and the horses.”

“If you really have given such an order, I would earnestly advise you to countermand it. You don’t mean to say, now you have had an opportunity for quiet thought, that you are not yourself persuaded that you have been the victim of a trick?”

“What do you call a trick? Was that a trick last night? Do not tell me I do not know my own husband, if you please. All this morning I say to myself, ‘I will go into the stable. No, no, no!’ This afternoon I find upon my table a piece of paper—‘Come!’ Who put it there? It is in my husband’s writing. I went to the stable, although I said to myself I would not go. I have heard there from Pourquoipas—ah, what I have heard! Never was I spoken to in such a way before. And by a horse! Ciel! It is a wonder I am not dead! It is enough that I promised to send the horses and the money, by Sam Tucker, to a man at Morlaix, whose name even I do not know.”

“I would strongly advise you to put off the fulfilment of your promise, at any rate, until the morning.”

“It is impossible! I am not a woman without courage; but I do not dare.”

She did dare. Mr. Fletcher persuaded her. The sacrifice was postponed.

“Now,” the gentleman told himself, “unless I am greatly mistaken, to-night I shall have another visitor, as the consequence of meddling with the affairs of others!”

His forebodings were realized—he had a visitor! He put off retiring to the latest possible moment. When he did seek the privacy of his own apartment, he still postponed the act of going to bed.

“I think I remember seeing somewhere

a little play called, 'Diamond cut Diamond.' If I am to receive a visitor, I think I'll receive him sitting up. I shall be able to offer him more courtesy than I should if I were in bed."

He put out the candle, taking care to have it within easy reach. He put a box of matches in his pocket—only regretting that there was no lantern handy. Taking off his boots, he sat down in a chair and waited. He waited hours. Nothing broke the silence of the night. No church clock told of the flight of time.

"One might almost think that some one had told my friend that I had a six-shooter in my pocket, the better to do him honour. If something doesn't happen soon I shall either have to walk about, or else go to sleep in my chair—and if it comes to that, I'd better go to bed."

The night stole on. Still nothing to break the monotony of waiting in the dark. More than once Mr. Fletcher had caught his chin in the act of falling forward on to his chest—his yawns became prodigious!

"It begins to occur to me that, at my time of life, nothing and no one is worth sitting up for all night. I'm off to bed."

He was about to go to bed, and, for that purpose, had already risen from his seat, when—he heard a sound!

"What's that?"

It might have been the creaking of a board. It might have been the movement of a mouse. It might have been any of the trifling noises of which we are conscious in the silence of the night. Of one thing only he was certain—he had heard a sound! He listened, his sense of hearing almost unnaturally alert. A sound again!

"Perhaps, after all, it's nothing but a mouse."

If it was a mouse, it was a curious one. The sound became plainer. It seemed to Mr. Fletcher that it was coming nearer.

"It's some one moving. I hope to goodness it isn't that old idiot, Madame."

But it did not seem as if it proceeded from the stairs. Surely, if she came at all, she would come that way.

"It strikes me that it is some one in the other room. For all I know, there may be some one sleeping there. Halloa! What's that?"

It was a ray of light—the merest pencil! It gleamed, like a streak of molten metal, across the floor.

"As I'm a Dutchman—it's shining through the wall!"

It was, there could be no doubt of it. It came through a crevice in the wainscot.

"I have it! I spot it all! Now for the next card in the game—it'll be a call for trumps. I rather fancy, too, that I shall be able to trump this little trick."

The pencil of light grew wider.

"They're slipping a panel in the wainscot—just behind the head of my bed! This thing gets beautifully plain!"

With a cat-like step, Mr. Fletcher moved towards the bed. The pencil of light was ceasing to be a pencil—it began to illuminate the room.

"Steady, my friend, that panel distinctly creaked. You must oil it next time, before you play this game. In delicate operations of this kind, 'trifles light as air' are apt to spoil the full effect."

The room was in that state of semi-radiance which had puzzled Mr. Fletcher on the previous night.

"Now, my friend, is it now? It is! He's coming! Trumped. Good evening, dear friend, good evening!"

With one hand he had some one by the collar of his coat, with the other he pointed a revolver into some one's face.

"Good evening, dear friend, good evening."

There ensued an interval for reflection. The captive seemed momentarily paralysed; the captor was taking stock. The prisoner was a little man—a very little man, scarcely reaching above Mr. Fletcher's waist.

"After all!"

The words proceeded from the little man in something between a moan and a gasp.

"As you say, my friend, after all—after all we meet again. Perhaps you will permit me to strike a light—my light! Your light we will examine later on."

The little man offered no resistance when his captor drew him towards the table. He stood in silence while the candle was being lit; nor did he flinch when Mr. Fletcher held it in front of his face, the better to see what manner of man he was.

"From the look of you, I should say you were the late Peltier's Corsican brother."

"You have a revolver. Shoot me. It is better so."

"It may be better so—a little later in the evening. At the present, it seems to

me that it would be a pity. Let me place you on the table.

Lifting him in his arms, Mr. Fletcher seated him on the edge of the table, the little man remaining as docile as a child. When, however, he had gained that post of vantage, "What it is to have been born a little man!" he groaned.

"The situation is not without its compensations. Women, mistaking your age, may bestow on you their caresses as generously as though you were a little boy. Now, may I ask—I trust you will not deem the question an impertinence—who you are, and what's your little game?"

"Do you not know me?"

"Unless you are the ghost of the late lamented Peltier, I am afraid I don't."

"I am Peltier himself."

"Peltier! Ernest! Whew!" Mr. Fletcher whistled. "But I thought that you were dead."

"In the morning I shall be dead."

The little man spoke with an air of tragic gloom.

"But so far as I understand the rights of the matter, you are—or you ought to be—stone dead now. You are buried."

"My coffin is buried."

The little man was still. Looking at him, marking his air of extreme depression, Mr. Fletcher began, faintly, to realise the situation.

"You do not understand?"

"Not yet—exactly."

"Although you do not understand—you have ruined me. It seems to me that that is well. Is it because you love my wife?"

"Your wife! Well, not precisely."

"What is it, then? You think, no doubt, you have done a brave thing, a clever thing, you, a stranger, who came into this country for the first time yesterday. You are mistaken. You see, I am a small man. My wife, she is as big as a house. Ever since the day I married her she has made my life no life at all. I could do nothing against her, she did with me as she pleased. Once I ran away. I did not go far, I had only three francs in my pocket. Those I had to steal. Sometimes, two, three times a day she would look to see if there was any money in my pockets. She found me, she brought me back, she locked me up, for three whole weeks, in this very room. She took away my clothes. She left me but my drawers, my slippers, and my shirt. That was very funny, was it

not? For you; but not for me. Oh, mon Dieu! After all, I am a man."

In the uncertain light Mr. Fletcher saw that the tears were rolling down the speaker's cheeks.

"I was ashamed to complain to people of the treatment I received, though I do not doubt that it was plain enough to all the world. I thought once or twice of killing her; but it seemed to me that it would be better that I should kill myself rather than her. This reflection put into my head the beginning of a scheme. At last things came to a crisis. She—she beat me. She beat me as though I were a child—me, a man of honour—with a slipper upon her knee! It is incredible, but it is none the less the truth, she beat me until I cried with pain! That was enough. I arranged my scheme. I pretended to be ill. I knew that she was very superstitious. I told her that, when I was dead, my soul would pass into the body of a horse."

"Pourquoipas?"

"Into the body of Pourquoipas. No sooner had I said it than I seemed to die."

"How did you manage that?"

"I swallowed a draught which made it seem—to her—that I was dead."

"But how about the doctor? Aren't such things as certificates of death known in this part of the world?"

"Sam Tucker saw to that."

"I thought our friend the jockey had a finger in the pie."

"He has been a good friend to me, Sam Tucker. She lost no time in putting me into a coffin. Dead, she feared me more than living. Sam Tucker fastened down the lid."

"Having first, I suppose, taken care to see that you were out of it."

"That is so. When the coffin had been buried we got her down into the stable. I spoke to her, as she thought, out of the mouth of Pourquoipas."

"And, pray, how was that edifying performance arranged? You spoke to me, you must remember, out of the mouth of Pourquoipas."

"It was very simple. There is a cellar underneath the stable. A small grating opens into the box of Pourquoipas. I spoke through the grating. You were easily deceived."

"You think so, do you? It seems to me, my friend, that you're a past master in deception."

"My idea was to frighten my wife into sending the horses—which, after all, are my own property—and a sum of money to an address in Morlaix. Then I should be able to start the world afresh, freed from the chains of slavery. There can be no doubt she would have sent them. You came upon the scene. By meddling in the affairs of others you have ruined all. It seems that I must starve, and, after all——"

"Hist! What's that?" Mr. Fletcher caught Monsieur Peltier by the arm. "There's some one coming up the stairs, and I'll bet a dollar it's your wife. Hide behind the curtains of the bed."

There came a tapping at the door.

"Who's there?"

"Open, monsieur, open!" When the door was opened, Madame Peltier stood without, in the airy costume of the night before. "Monsieur, I cannot sleep, it is no good. All the night I think that I hear voices——"

A figure advanced into the centre of the room, the figure of a very little man.

"Agnes!"

The lady fainted. Sixteen solid stone fell with a thud upon the ground. Mr. Fletcher brought her round in course of time.

"It was Ernest!"

"Upon my word," said Mr. Fletcher, "I believe it was."

"It is enough. Better to be ruined, than to die. I will send the money and the horses in the morning."

And she sent them!

AN ITALIAN IRISHMAN.

In the beginning of the year 1802, during the short peace that followed the Treaty of Amiens, four boys and a man left the Lombard Highlands, passed over the Alps, tramped through Switzerland, and travelled along the Rhine, making for a northern seaport. The man—Andrea Faroni by name—had been well paid to bring the four boys to London, where arrangements had been made to apprentice them to respectable tradesmen. The respectable tradesmen, however, were saved all trouble in this respect; for, with the financial genius of the country from which we derive the familiar sign of the three golden balls, Faroni kept the money and took the lads to Ireland instead of to their proper destination.

It thus happened that in the summer of 1802, a chubby, bright-eyed, curly-headed, pleasant-faced Italian boy, some fifteen years of age, was to be seen wandering about the streets of Dublin selling cheap prints in leaden frames. All the English the little fellow knew was "Buy! Buy!" and when asked the price he had to count the number of pennies on his fingers. Such was the humble beginning of the career of a man, who, without friends or money, culture or genius, rose to opulence and honour, and became a distinguished benefactor of his adopted country, contributing largely to its material prosperity.

The pictures sold by young Charles Bianconi represented sacred subjects, the Royal Family, Bonaparte and his most famous generals, and other popular heroes. When the metropolitan demand for this kind of art slackened, the youth was sent into the provinces as far as Waterford and Clonmel, having by this time picked up a little more English. The profits of the print-selling went into the master's pocket; but at the end of a year and a half Faroni behaved more handsomely than might have been expected. He restored the lad his freedom and—what was perhaps as valuable—his purse containing one hundred louis d'or.

With this capital, stout limbs, and a light heart, Charles Bianconi began the world on his own account. He procured a deal box, filled it with prints, strapped it on his shoulders, and became a pedlar, travelling twenty to thirty miles a day on foot. Such a life was simple drudgery, intolerable to a young fellow of spirit. At this period the contrast between himself and the man who could afford to ride or drive struck him very forcibly, and he determined "to become somebody"—a determination which he kept before him all the rest of his days.

Like every other stranger who has wandered through the south of Ireland, the friendless Italian boy found the people kindly, genial, and social. He had much in common with the warmhearted Celts, and he soon became a favourite in some pleasant family circles. Probably a desire to rise in the social scale first made him ashamed of his great box of prints. At all events he discarded it, and procured a more genteel article in the form of a portfolio.

But even a portfolio could not reconcile him to the disagreeable and vulgar calling of a pedlar; so in 1806 he turned carrier

and gilder, and opened a shop in Carrick-on-Suir. Carrick, however, was too small or too inartistic a town to afford sufficient scope for the new enterprise. He therefore removed to Waterford, where he issued cards "showing," he says, "that I was a carver and gilder of the first class." Whether he was really "a carver and gilder of the first class," may be doubted, for he naively informs us: "I made up for the want of knowledge in the manual details of my business by incessant industry. I frequently worked from six in the morning until two hours after midnight, with the exception of two hours for dinner and recreation." It was by such indefatigable industry, and a certain tenacity of purpose more characteristic of the northern races than of the southern, that he laid the foundations of his future success. At this time, though he had but little leisure, he managed to read Smith's "Wealth of Nations," and was much struck by the chapters on the division of labour and the value of time.

After two not unprosperous years, Biancoconi removed to Clonmel, which henceforth became his home. Here he set up in a corner shop, and was hence called by a rough pun, "Bryan Cooney," namely, Bryan of the Corner. The Cooneys had once been an important sept in the neighbourhood. Some of them were still to the fore, and our hero was surprised one market day by an old lady who had driven in a good distance to enquire as to what branch of the clan he belonged to!

In Clonmel he added a little to his receipts by taking in lodgers, and thereby ran considerable risk of matrimony; for though he was not very fond of the ladies, the ladies were fond of him. His first tenant, a fashionable milliner named Mary Anne K——, invited him to meet her aunt at tea. The aunt thought it an excellent opportunity to get the young lady comfortably settled in life; so, taking Biancoconi into a corner, she said, in her severest tones:

"What do you mean by your attentions to my niece? Do you purpose seeking her in marriage?"

"Bedad, ma'am," said Biancoconi, "I've no time to get married, but I'll find you a husband for Mary Anne." And with characteristic energy he soon provided a young man who pleased both the ladies.

Biancoconi now became completely identified with the people of his adopted country. He had lost all traces of his Italian origin

—except his name and a slight foreign accent—and was rapidly growing more Irish than the Irish themselves.

It is, of course, by his system of cars that Charles Biancoconi is best known, and will be remembered. The hardships of the peasantry in going from place to place on foot, the memory of what he had himself suffered, and, possibly, the prospect of inaugurating a profitable business, made him ponder deeply the subject of improved locomotion. At that time railways existed only in the prophetic mind of George Stephenson. In Ireland travelling was difficult, and public conveyances were few, even on the great lines of road. For instance, the only means of communication between Carrick-on-Suir and Waterford—a distance of sixteen miles by road, and thirty by water—was Tom Morrissy's boat, which carried ten persons, and made the journey in five hours, tide permitting. Neither Tom nor the passengers appear to have paid much attention to the tides, trusting probably to the usual good fortune of the careless. It struck Biancoconi that the man who organised a cheap and regular system of communication would deserve well of his country, and, perhaps, make his own fortune. As a small contribution to this end, in July, 1815, he started a one-horse jaunting-car, to run daily from Clonmel to Oahir, eight miles off, returning every evening. It was not a success, for, unfortunately, then, as now, the Irish peasant had more time than money to spend.

Another man would have given up the enterprise in despair. But Biancoconi was not as other men. The able general is greater in defeat than in victory. The wily Italian resorted to a ruse. He privately started an opposition car to his own at a cheaper fare. Nobody knew the secret—not even the rival drivers, who raced against each other as only Irish drivers or American steamboat captains can race. The excitement, the rivalry, the free lifts, the cheap fares, appealed so powerfully to the people, that in a short time both cars came in full.

Thus began that great network of communication which became famous throughout the civilised world. The business gradually and steadily increased under the active superintendence of the proprietor. It is unnecessary to dwell on the details of this increase, but a few interesting particulars of the establishment as it stood in 1857 may be given. In that year

Bianconi had agents in every part of Ireland except the north-east corner. He had nearly five hundred persons in his employment; he kept one thousand four hundred horses; his vehicles ran four thousand three hundred miles every day, and traversed twenty-two counties. Between passenger traffic and mail contracts he annual income nearly touched the handsome figure of forty thousand pounds.

The cars themselves were of three kinds: "Finn McCools," or heavy vans, drawn by two or three horses, and carrying sixteen persons; "Faugh-a-ballaghs," or two-wheeled vehicles, drawn by one horse; and a middle class known by the name of "Massey Dawsons"—so called after a famous sporting squire in the south of Ireland. They were all built in the style of the ordinary Irish jaunting-car, with which everybody is familiar, and travelled at an average rate of seven miles an hour: no despicable speed, taking all the circumstances into consideration.

Bianconi found—as modern tramway and omnibus companies still find—that passenger traffic offers many opportunities of speculation. To prevent this he invented and applied a most elaborate system of checks and counterchecks. Whether it was effectual can hardly be known, but it was certainly far-reaching, for it "extended to forbidding a groom's wife to keep hens, lest the oats should find a wrong direction." His great reliance, however, was placed upon spies. The "official spies" were always on the road. They were supplied with money to pay their fares and tip the drivers. But the drivers were not often caught napping. It was a war of stratagem and artifice, into which Irishmen enter with peculiar delight; and when a carpet-bag stuffed with bran-dust, or some other untoward incident revealed the travelling spy, the news ran along the line like wildfire.

It is worthy of note that Bianconi did not oppose the introduction of railways. He was shrewd enough to see the futility of resisting the inevitable, and he even took shares in some of the lines. The railways did not do him so much harm as might be supposed; but they drove him to seek fresh fields and pastures new for his cars, and thus remote localities received the advantages of regular communication with the outer world.

Turning to the more immediate personal concerns of our hero, we find him, in 1826, shutting up his shop and concentrating his

energies on the car business, with a balance at his bankers of some two thousand pounds. Having thus "risen to affluence and a blue shirt"—to borrow the expressive language of the immortal Colonel Starbottle—he proceeded to woo and win Miss Mary Hayes, the daughter of a wealthy Dublin stockbroker, and the happy pair settled down in Clonmel. His ideas of home life were somewhat different from those of the ordinary British Philistine; but he proved a tender husband and an indulgent father. After his marriage he was infected with that disease which is peculiarly virulent in Ireland, namely "earth hunger." Being an alien, however, he was incapable of owning land. In those days it was very difficult for a foreigner to become a British subject; but after a great deal of trouble he was naturalised in 1831.

Meantime, as was natural in a Roman Catholic, he threw himself heart and soul into the Emancipation movement. Indeed, throughout his long life he took a deep and active interest in political affairs, being for many years the intimate friend of Dan O'Connell, to whose memory he erected a monument in Rome. But Bianconi was a man of independent views. Though he bowed to the authority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in most things, he stood up against them in the cause of national education; and he had small sympathy with the extreme Young Ireland Party of '48. His daughter says:

"Priests, politicians, and patriots overran my father's house in those days. He did not doubt they were sincere, but he could not refrain from drawing a moral of the melancholy results consequent upon not staying at home and minding one's own business."

In local affairs Bianconi played a distinguished part. He entered the Clonmel Town Council, and in 1844 became Mayor of the Borough, a position which he prized and adorned. As Chief Magistrate he ruled the little community like a patriarchal autocrat, distributing justice, charity, and advice liberally and impartially. But though fond of making "neat speeches," he was not always sure of the correctness of his language, for, after a decision, he would say to his clerk, "Tom, is that English?"

Meanwhile he had been gratifying the "earth hunger"—at one time or another he spent over seventy thousand pounds in the purchase of land—and in 1846 he obtained a pretty little place at Longfield,

near Clonmel, which thenceforth became his constant residence.

Some years after this he visited Italy, spending two winters in Rome and three in Pisa. After an absence of half a century, his native land was little to his taste. He had completely lost touch with its inhabitants, as the following incident shows:

"Going with an English friend on a ride to Tivoli, he stopped to examine a shepherd as to his mode of life, and expressed much wonder because the peasant only put on clean linen once a week; but the shepherd refused point-blank to believe that my father could be so wasteful as to want a clean shirt every day."

Perhaps the reader may also "express much wonder" as to how often Bianconi changed his own linen when he was peddling twopenny engravings and living in a Dublin slum.

In 1865 our hero had the misfortune to break his thigh, an accident from which he never completely recovered. During the remainder of his life he was compelled to go about on crutches or on a wheeled chair. But the activity of his nature could not be repressed. He threw himself into the 1868 election with all his old fervour, and was gratified by a great Liberal victory.

After the accident he disposed of his business to his agents, on reasonable terms, and, thenceforth, the cars knew him no more, though, in many places, his name clings to them still.

To a man who had led such an active life, rest was impossible, and motion a necessity. In his old age, and despite his broken limb, he rushed about in his carriage or his wheeled chair to petty sessions, grand juries, shows, and meetings of all sorts; and to the end he took a lively interest in affairs political, ecclesiastical, and social.

A day or two before he died he was too feeble to read his own letters, yet, as his clerk read them to him, he discovered an error of eightpence in a large rent account! The ruling passion still held him in its grasp. But all his earthly accounts were finally closed in September, 1875, when he passed away peacefully at the ripe age of eighty-nine, and was laid to rest in the mortuary chapel he had built for himself and his family.

The character of this remarkable man was composed of many incongruous traits. He possessed many of the characteristics

common to self-made men, together with some peculiarities wholly his own. He was not ashamed of his humble origin; nay, he was proud of it, and used to boast that he had been "pedlar, shopkeeper, car-owner, land-owner, alderman, mayor, county magistrate, grand-juror, and deputy-lieutenant for his county." His memory for faces was abnormal. He knew every man in his employment, and had the knack of always selecting the right man for the right place.

His early poverty seems to have left an enduring mark upon Bianconi's character. He was always particular about money matters, often strangely penurious even in his affluence. When an old man he declared he would walk a mile to save sixpence; and while abroad he actually did write letters "more than double the length of those he wrote at home, to get the full value out of the postage stamp." When driving in his carriage he would pick up a passenger on the road, provided the man paid the same fare as by the public car. He frequently resorted to some cunning device in order to take a petty advantage of his tenants. On the other hand, however, he was both liberal and charitable. His drivers had orders to give free lifts to poor people, and especially to women carrying babies; and the whole of his fees and emoluments as Mayor of Clonmel he gave to charitable purposes. Indeed, he seems to have been popular among all classes. It is a remarkable fact that his cars were never stopped either by day or night, not even during the Tithe troubles and the White-boy rising, though they carried His Majesty's mails.

Bianconi's hospitality was unstinted, especially to the clergy. All his life he was a religious man—perhaps more after the southern manner than the northern. He taught Scripture and Catechism classes, and attended Mass every Saturday morning, winter and summer. An amusing account is given of his devotions when he resided in Clonmel:

"Every Saturday evening he rushed into the small, dark friary chapel, and threw himself on his knees before a certain confessor. Any fair devotee who happened to be before him would be requested by the priest to give place to the busy foreigner. While a lady would be saying her 'Confiteor,' Charles Bianconi would have prayed, and confessed, and gone off again."

If it be a mark of genius to write an illegible hand, then Bianconi was a genius of the first order. Often after writing a letter, he was unable to read it himself. In this dilemma he would call up Pat O'Neill, who could decipher the hieroglyphics with the ease of an Edgar Allan Poe. Bianconi once wrote to Mr. Hayes from London. Mr. Hayes was unable to make out the address to which the reply should be sent, so he cut it off, and fastened it to the outside of the envelope, trusting to the ingenuity of the post office sorters. Strange to say, the letter reached its destination in due course.

Three children were born to Bianconi; but only one survived him. This was the younger daughter, who married Morgan John O'Connell, a nephew of the Liberator, and it is to her biography that we owe most of our information about her father's private life and character.

The present writer is old enough to remember a time when the only public conveyance to many considerable towns in Ireland was "Bianconi's long car." Its appearance created a great stir all along the route. As the hour of its arrival approaches, there is an unusual bustle about the inn door. Suddenly the van drives up at a spanking pace, and in a moment all is activity and confusion. The ostlers run out; the passengers alight, stamp their feet, and rush into the inn; the stationer gets his papers; the postman flies off with the mails; the parcels are sorted out and delivered to their owners; and the gossips, male and female, fall a-talking over the latest news. Meantime, the horses are changed; those passengers who have further to go rush out and get on again; the driver mounts his seat and cracks his whip, and away goes the long car amid a cloud of dust, and the "whoops" and "hurroos" of the numerous small boys that everywhere abound.

Such a scene may yet be witnessed in many a small town in Ireland; but the spread of railways is making these towns rarer. Even after the introduction of railways, Bianconi carried the blessings of civilisation to remote and isolated places beyond their reach. He was a true philanthropist; for, in addition to providing conveyances for the humblest, he greatly cheapened the commodities that the poor require. To use his own illustration, calico which sold in western villages at ninepence or tenpence a yard owing to the dearness of carriage, was sold at five-

pence after he started his cars, so that the peasant could have two shirts instead of one. Also, he helped to break down social prejudices. There were no first-class compartments on his cars: rich and poor travelled back to back.

With all his foibles and failings, Bianconi's character was made of sterling stuff, and its influence will long be felt in the land of his adoption. The poor little Italian who landed on our shores friendless and forlorn, and who, by his own energy and industry, raised himself to wealth, fame, and honour, has left an example which Irishmen will long admire, even if they do not imitate.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "*Louis Draycott*," "*Geoffrey Stirling*," "*Ann Epey's Foundling*," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

MASTER PHIL HOLDS A LEVÉE.

IT so happened, just about the time of Master Phil's nocturnal escapade, that there was a scarcity of any item of stirring social interest in the "little military hothouse"; consequently, any small event was seized upon, made the most of, worried, and petted by every one.

By five in the afternoon of the day following on the evening described in our last chapter, Mr. Jones awoke from an after-lunch nap in the cosy arm-chair of his private sitting-room at the hotel, to find himself famous.

Varied were the versions of the adventure with King Baby told and retold by this person and that; alarming, indeed, the positions of peril in which that young potentate was supposed to have been placed, of which that of hanging by a rent in his night-shirt from a nail on the summit of the turret, and being rescued by this wonderful Mr. Jones who climbed up the water-spout "like a cat," while Mrs. Clutterbuck was in strong hysterics in the road below, was one of the most popular with the rank and file of the 193rd.

Several august personages called at the hotel. The waiter, bringing up each card, laid upon a silver salver, held it out as far as possible at arm's length, as though determined to make the most of it.

"But, indeed, I did nothing," said poor Mr. Jones, protesting.

This was looked upon as modest worth ; and ladies said, when they heard of it :

"How sweet of him, isn't it, my dear ! All the same, those Clutterbuck boys are dreadful creatures."

"Plenty, plenty Inglis' milords come to see Sir Jones to-day," said the waiter, bowing with the grace of a Figaro ; "Michael plenty run down and up ; make plenty hot"—a crafty representation, which caused the transfer of what Jim would have called a "yellow boy" from the pocket of Sir Jones to that of the obsequious and smiling Michael.

"I am going out," said Mr. Jones. "If any one else calls, I am not at home."

"Very well, signor," replied the other, with a more flourishing bow than before. Then he stood at the door to watch the visitor down the street.

"The English got plenty money ; it is no mattare to take a leetle from them," he observed to a friend, priding himself on his knowledge of the ordinary colloquial manner of speech peculiar to that richly-endowed nation.

Mr. Jones sauntered slowly on under his white umbrella lined with a delicate green, unconscious of certain curious glances cast upon him by the passers-by. Down the Quarantine steps, getting gingerly into his boat, acknowledging the salutes of his men—salutes accompanied by the broadest grins of delight, and much twinkling of gold ear-rings depending from swarthy ears—crossing the blindingly-bright bay, still ran the same thought in his head, like the burden of some sweet song :

"Shall I see her to-day ? Shall I see her to-day ?"

As he neared the shore at Sleims, another thought grew out of that dominant one—a thought that made his heart give a bound under his spotless white waistcoat, and sent a wave of colour to his face. If he did see the fair original of the picture on the easel, if he did meet and greet Mabel Graham to-day, she could hardly look upon him as a perfect stranger—not just as she would have done if last night had never been.

Had not Jim—that most "bavard" of urchins !—said that little Phil was her "heart's idol" ? Mr. Jones was a plain, simple-going man, and hated to be made a fuss over ; but he would not object to a grateful glance from those soft, brown eyes, and a smile from those perfect lips . . . He felt conscious of being

fluttered ; he felt shy at the prospect before him.

"Do not row so hard," he said, from under his awning, to the nearest oarsman ; "it is hot."

"Plenty hot, signor," said the man, showing all the ivory-white teeth in his head ; "gratzie, gratzie, signor," and muttered something in Maltese to his companion.

The boat moved with more stateliness ; but the shore had to come at last, and the olive-tinted arms were held out to help the Signor Inglis' to land.

It quickly dawned upon Mr. Jones that he was not the only hero of that day. King Baby was holding a levée, and as conscious of his own importance as any monarch who ever held Court at Saint James's or Buckingham Palace.

They were all there—the whole of what Mrs. Musters, with much curling of the nose, was wont to describe as "the Clutterbuck lot."

Sir Peyton Paling, in a state of much excitement and gush, was balancing himself on heels and toes on the hearth-rug, stuttering a good deal, and much hampered by Jim, who always took a keen interest in him, and liked to stand close to him and look straight up into his face.

Whatever Jim did, Algie did ; so there were two hangers-on to the long and somewhat uncertain legs of the bibulous one, and, as a natural consequence, he nearly fell over them as he rushed forward to greet Mr. Jones.

"See the conquering hero cuc-cuc-cuc-comes," he said, munching his words as usual. "Bless my soul, sir ! I congratulate you, I do, 'pon honour. Presence of mind—grand thing, that—n-n-nothing like it ; but for you, our young friend here"—here he blinked round with short-sighted eyes for Master Phil, in white frock and blue ribbons, but failed to find him—"our young friend there—wherever that may be—would be—wouldn't he— Bless my soul, Clutterbuck, the subject's too stupendous. I get confused—I can't face it."

A running ripple of laughter from Jim interrupted this tirade, and Sir Peyton looked down indignantly at the figure at his feet.

"You young sc-sc-scamp," he said "what are you laughing at ?"

"You look so funny," cried Jim, and as nothing less would relieve his feelings, he lay down on the white, silky rug and

rolled there; Algie joining him with faint squeals, as of a guinea-pig in a high state of delight.

"Gad! Clutterbuck," said the Honourable Bob, screwing his glass into his eye, and gazing with much disfavour upon the two prostrate ones, "these boys of yours ought to be sent to school, you know; they really ought, you know."

"There's no money to pay for it," said Jim, sitting straight up on end, "ma says so, and I'm glad. I don't want to go to school."

"I fancy boys have more scope at home, Daere, don't you know," said the Major, who had not caught the opening statement of his son's speech, approaching the group, and looking confidingly and beamingly at every one; "their tender shoots, if one may so put it, are not so apt to get nipped—frost-bitten, as it were."

"Scope!" cried the Honourable Bob; impatiently; "I should think they have scope indeed; as for that young shaver over there"—pointing to Phil, who now sat enthroned upon the knee of Mr. Jones, surrounded by an admiring and interested group—"I hope you think he showed a taste for scope last night. I should have whacked him well when I'd got him safe in if he'd been mine, give you my word."

The Major shook his head, with a tender, deprecating smile; a smile that seemed to say that when the Honourable Robert Daere should be a father, he would take a different view of things.

"Still," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, holding up a warning finger—as much as to say that midnight sirings on the coping of the turret were to be things of the past with Master Phil—"Phil was a naughty, naughty boy, and frightened poor father very much."

"I was a naughty, naughty boy," echoed the young sinner, with quiet complacency; "I fight'ned fardie benny bad. My officers be welly glad I didn't fall quite down and be breeksed; they'd have been welly solly, poor chaps, if I'd fell right down."

And Phil's "officers"—Rowan, Vernon Halkett, the Honourable Bob, Ginger, and the rest—gathered round him, murmured that their grief would have been inexpressible and overwhelming.

"What an overdrawn child!" says some one, reading this, my story.

Well, I am sorry King Baby strikes you in that light. All the excuse I can offer is, that I am drawing him just as he was;

just as I saw him, heard him, knew him, loved him.

Listen to one or two stories about him. Those who have children of their own, and have watched their little budding ways and odd humours, will recognise the ring of reality even when set in the midst of fiction.

King Baby was bidden to a children's party. He was duly attired in his best frock, of which the skirt spread out like a ballet-girl's, and swathed in a sash that made him look, when seen from behind, as though a huge blue butterfly with wings mightily extended had alighted just above his waist, and there poised. All over his bonnie head his hair shone like a glory, and his eyes—blue, to match the butterfly—were wide with anticipation. Arrived, however, at the dazzling halls whither he had been bidden, a change came over the spirit of King Baby. After a long, calm, observant glance at the muster of little ones congregated round, he said, with a long, heavy sigh: "What a lot of chil'uns!" then, stretching out his arms to his sister Mabel, "Take me home."

King Baby did not approve of the world holding so many rival sovereigns. Again, there had been a grand parade on the Floriana ground; ladies had come to witness it—among the rest, Mrs. Clutterbuck, Mabel, and the "scramble." After it was all over, and the "personage" for whom the display had been ordered well under weigh to the Palace, the Major of the 193rd carried his little son into the mess-room, and set him in the middle of the long, narrow table. The fellows were soon round the child you may be sure, while he, watching the many figures all in scarlet-and-gold, and the laughing faces of his beloved "officers," looked up the table and down the table, and then, lifting his little hand, and throwing back his bonnie head, cried out:

"S'lute!"

Which they did, amid much laughter and loud applause.

Such was Master Phil—otherwise, King Baby; no common child it will be perceived, and one able to hold his own on all occasions—equally when perched on the highest point of the turret parapet, as on the knee of Mr. Jones, receiving an ovation as one rescued from imminent peril, and restored to a world that could ill do without him.

"Have you seen where he's got the little yellow boy?" said saucy Jim, taking

up his stand by Mr. Jones, and pointing to his brother.

In silence Phil dived down his own little fat neck, and produced a tiny bag of pale blue silk, neatly stitched, and attached to a blue silk cord.

"He—he be's in there," said Phil, "nice and com'fy."

"Mabel made the bag for it," added Jim. Mr. Jones had been longing to know if Miss Graham had arrived; he had caught himself giving more than one curious glance round the room, and then checked himself, as though caught out in a meanness.

What right had he to be curious about a person he had never seen—except in a picture! Might he not well be content and at peace, with pretty Phil on his knee, and every one about him so full of gratitude, and kindness; making more, indeed, of last night's adventure than was called for!

Phil insisted upon taking a peep at the "yellow boy" before the blue bag that sister Mabel had made was consigned to the bosom of the embroidered frock once more, and Jim took a look at it, too; but with less envy than might have been expected, considering his ineffectual petition of the night before.

This cheerful and collected frame of mind on his part was, however, presently explained, by the appearance of the silver disc of a dollar displayed just above the trouser-pocket of his sailor-suit.

"I've got some money, too, I have," he said, with a slight toss of defiance at Mr. Jones. "Captain Rowan gave it to me this morning for telling him Mabel was coming home—"

"Give'd it us dis mornin' cos' we tole him," began Algie, who had listened to his brother with the deepest interest, and wished to put in his little Amen; but, happily perhaps for all parties—more especially for Charley Rowan—the joint narrative was abruptly broken off in the middle, by the scuffle of horses' feet on the white, dusty roadway, and the precipitate flight of Jim, Algie, and Master Phil to the half-open parlour.

It was His Excellency the governor's youngest daughter—a maiden fair to see—who sat her grey pony with delightful ease and grace, and showed a smiling, *débonnaire* face under the shadow of her broad-brimmed sombrero. The military secretary towered on a mighty roan beside her, and, at a respectful distance, a well-mounted

groom reined in a restive bay, that pawed the hard ground impatiently to Jim's high delight.

Major and Mrs. Clutterbuck were on the door-step in a trice, the former bowing and beaming with his most expansive geniality. The military secretary, who was in mufti, "boo'd foo' low" like the Laird o' Cockpen, and doffed his hat, while Miss Ermyntrude Oglevie bent from her saddle to tell Phil's mother how pleased they were, and how glad they were, that that graceless young person was all safe and sound, instead of being dashed into a thousand atoms.

"How frightened you must have been!" cried the bright-eyed girl, who was as free from affectation or assumption of any kind as Mabel herself, and whose sweet Irish eyes showed a sheen as of unshed tears, as she spoke of King Baby's danger; "and how clever of that Mr.—Mr.—"

"Jones," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, as Miss Oglevie hesitated.

"How clever of him to get the naughty darling to come down like that! It made mamma cry, it did, indeed, when they told her about it."

The military secretary muttered something into his moustache; he was, perhaps, hardly as keenly interested in Master Phil as the rest, besides being supposed to be under the blight of a recent disappointment in love; but he meant to be sympathetic, all the same.

Miss Ermyntrude would not dismount, as she had to hurry home for some function or other; but she lingered awhile, and presently two or three men, coming up from the steps, joined the group, and the great event of the day was still under discussion, when, suddenly, Jim, burrowing through those in front, appeared close by the grey pony's saddle-flap.

Jim looked earnestly upwards at the laughing face under the shady hat; he planted his legs on a firm basis, a glad light dawning in his eyes as he realised who the lady was.

"Did you come to see Phil?" he said, in his clear, piping voice. "Every one is glad about Phil, you know."

Miss Oglevie bent low from her saddle.

"Yes, my dear," she said, "I came to tell you all how glad we are about little Phil."

The Honourable Bob—a great favourite, be it said, with the Palace people—had gone quietly out into the strip of shade in which the groom round the grey pony

was gathered, shaken hands with the fair Ermyntrude, and now, scenting mischief, kept his eye-glass well on Jim.

The mischief exceeded his wildest fears.

"Is old Bogle——" began Jim, in his high treble.

And then, somehow, the boy was swept aside, and found himself on the outskirts of the group, while the Honourable Bob, with his hand on the grey pony's bridle, was explaining to its rider that he feared that interesting animal had a stone in its off front hoof. He then raised the said hoof adroitly in his hand, apparently manipulated the offending stone, and received Miss Oglevie's thanks with his usual calm grace. Meanwhile, Jim, like a football skilfully dribbled along a field, found himself whisked into the house by one person, and shaken when there by another person, and finally deposited in the Major's "little den," feeling cruelly ill-used, and decidedly suppressed in his endeavours after plenty of "scope."

Nobody missed him, as it happened, for public attention became entirely concentrated upon King Baby, who was carried out by the Major himself to do homage to Miss Ermyntrude. Very bravely looked he in all the grandeur of his white dress, with the big blue butterfly behind. Not the least flurried, either, was Phil at finding himself the centre of attention—not he! Kings, you know, are used to that sort of thing.

"Oh, you darling!" cried Miss Oglevie. "Please, Mr. Dacre, hold Rob Roy steady, while Major Clutterbuck puts him on the front of my saddle. There"—as Phil was hoisted to that proud eminence—"now, tell me what made you go and walk on the roof like that?"

"Wanted to," said King Baby, with calm dignity.

Was not the royal will reason enough? They laughed and were very merry out there in the warm, balmy air by the purple sea. Even the military secretary condescended to smile at Master Phil.

Meanwhile, inside, in the shady rooms, of which the furthest one led into the side-garden with its fountain and oleander-tree in the centre of a small flagged court, Mr. Jones was going through the most stupendous experiences—experiences which were to leave their mark upon each day, nay, each hour of his life to come.

Sir Peyton Paling had constituted him-

self a sort of volunteer guard over Master Jim, hedging that rampant young person in one corner by an ingenious arrangement of legs and a chair; beyond this was a sort of patrol, composed of Captain Rowan and Vernon Halkett. Escape was hopeless, as Jim quickly saw, resigning himself to fate, and, at the same time, relieving his mind by making the most derisive grimaces at Algie, who hung about the captive faithful as Blondel of old.

"Gad! that boy is capable of anything," said Sir Peyton, lighting a cigarette—smoking was permitted in the little den—"I shouldn't be one b-b-bit surprised to hear him tell Miss Ermyntrude that I call the Governor Old Boggles."

"So you do," said Jim, who had listened to the Baronet's speech with undisguised joy.

"What will your sister Mabel say when she hears how you have been behaving!" said Charley Rowan, and, behold the evil spirit was quenched in Jim.

Captain Rowan had touched the raw—the victim winced.

"I won't say it again. . . . I'm sorry let me out, Sir Peyton. . . . I want to see the pretty lady. . . ."

"Jim be's solly," chanted Algie, getting ready to shed a few tears, if needs be.

"Young crocodile," said the Baronet, munching his moustache.

"But I am sorry," persisted Jim; "and please don't tell Mabel."

Then she came in.

This may seem a bald way of announcing Miss Graham's entrance, and introducing her to the pages of our story; but it is the simple and unadorned manner in which the event—like to which there was none other before or since—pictured itself to the mind of Amphlett Jones then and for ever afterwards. There are things that need no dressing up: sublime in their grandeur and their beauty, simplicity best becomes them.

Mabel Graham came not only into the room, but into a man's life; and the moment was too supreme to need other than that plain, unvarnished statement.

The tattie that hung over a door—not hitherto noticed by Mr. Jones—was put gently aside, and the face of the picture upon the easel—the face that he had seen limned upon the bright haze of the moonlight, and before the darkness when he closed his eyes—looked in upon him.

Of course Miss Graham looked in upon the rest of the company too; but that was

a matter of no account at all. There appeared to be no one else in the world save herself and himself at that moment; nor am I sure there ever was—in a certain sense—for Mr. Jones any more. As the tattie fell behind her, he saw her full figure, rather above the middle height, slender, yet rounded and womanly in its curves, clothed in something soft and smoke-coloured—like a summer cloud, he thought—and girt about the pliant waist with a belt of wrought silver. Her hair, soft and feathery, fell low towards her darkly-pencilled brows, and her eyes—those wonderful eyes that were pure as a child's, yet sad as those of a woman who has lived, and loved, and lost, and wept—looked straight into his; yes, gave but scant heed to the young warriors in their picturesque undress uniforms, they who rose so promptly to their feet, who looked all a-light, as it were, at sight of her—paid no heed to them at all, but came across to him—Amphlett Jones—piloted by Bertie, held, indeed, by one slim hand, but by one only, so that the other was free to be laid in that of the stranger.

"This is Mr. Jones," said Bertie, taking the direct method of introduction; then he added, with simple confidence in the interest the visitor would take in the announcement, "Mabel has come back, you see, and she is so glad Phil did not fall down and break himself all up."

"Indeed I am," said Mabel, a quiver about her lips as she spoke. "I am so glad to meet you—to see you. I wish I quite knew what to say to thank you as I long to do."

"Say nothing," said Mr. Jones, "I am more than repaid already for what I did."

Then she turned to Captain Rowan, greeting him, as Mr. Jones thought, a little coldly.

At all events, he was very sure he would rather have the greeting she had given to him, even though it were only for Phil's dear sake. It was pleasant to shine, even if the light with which you shone were only a reflected one. It was also agreeable—and this pleasure had an element of surprise in it—to Amphlett Jones, to feel himself—in a way—a social success. To a man whose whole life had been spent in hard, unceasing application to business, this sensation had a freshness and charm that was indescribable. A bird, long caged, suddenly finding itself free, and

rising on rapid wings towards a sun-bright sky, might feel in something the same way.

"My dear sir," cried the Major, entering the shaded room like a sunbeam, "you are indeed the hero of the hour. Miss Ermyntrude would not let me bring you out to be presented to her; but she expressed a hope you would put your name on the Governor's book; and I shall be charmed to be your cicerone to the Palace. Shall we say to-morrow? That's well. I'll call for you in the Strada Reale, and then, our errand accomplished, you will return here with me, take 'pot luck,' as they say, and spend a quiet evening—eh?"

It seemed as if a sort of cloud of silence suddenly brooded over the room. Mabel assuredly gave no sign of having heard what her father said; she never lifted her sweet eyes to Mr. Jones once, but, with Phil cuddled up upon her knee, sat silent and thoughtful by the window, watching the sea.

Then came the sound of rapidly-approaching wheels, and Jim, who had hung himself over the window-ledge, cried out:

"Here's Mrs. Musters. Oh, bother!"

At which he was promptly suppressed by the united efforts of everybody.

When doors and windows stand agape, voices—especially shrill, young voices—are apt to carry unpleasantly.

Mrs. Musters was a person of most suspicious mind. She scented fancy alights as a terrier scents imaginary rats—trying her best to run them to earth, and making her spouse unspeakably miserable in the process.

Mrs. Musters had come to see what she could see, and hear what she could hear. Her husband had driven her over from Floriana in their remarkably neatly-appointed park phaeton, and—as theirs was a case in which the wife was always sure of a welcome for the sake of her "better half"—Major and Mrs. Clutterbuck made them most kindly welcome; indeed, as Dr. Musters tossed the reins to the smart groom, the Major was on the step, wreathed in his best smiles.

Phil, standing between Vernon Halkett's knees, no sooner caught sight of the somewhat rugged, but most kindly face of Dr. Musters, than he trotted across the room.

"My 'nother docky!" he cried, holding up his little arms; and his "other doctor" caught him, and swung him high in air.

"What have you been doing, my young shaver," he said; "making a squirrel of yourself, and frightening every one out of their wits? It's a mercy I hadn't to come and glue all the bits of you together, Master Phil."

"I'm dood now," said Master Phil, as his friend set him on his legs again; and over the golden head the doctor's kind grey eyes met Mrs. Clutterbuck's, and said all that was needful without a word.

The Major's wife had few friends in the world whom she valued more highly than the Surgeon-Major of the 193rd, as, indeed, she had good reason to value him, for ill would have rested the head of Mrs. Musters on her pillow had she suspected even the half of what her spouse could have told her of the Major's household. She often said—not without bitterness—that "Jeff was as close as wax," but there is every reason to believe the good woman never for one moment realised how close he was; and how thoroughly he realised—loving his homely wife very really and sincerely all the time—that she was not just the woman for a man to give confidences to. Ten years ago the hair had begun to thin on the doctor's crown; now it was a mere web, brought from the sides with some ingenuity, to cover deficiencies, and the time might be near at hand when he would have to take his promotion and leave the dear old 193rd; but, in all his career, it may safely be said, he had never told his Amelia anything that might not have been safely proclaimed from the house-tops, and no one a bit the worse for the ceremony.

Almost immediately on the heels of these two, arrived Mrs. Lindsay, the senior Major's wife, and little Mrs. Carbonel, bright-eyed and dainty as some tropical bird, and, for once in a way, without her Fred, that dazzling individual being absent "on urgent private business" in England.

Indeed, King Baby was holding quite a royal reception, Mr. Jones—to whom every one was especially cordial and polite—sharing the honours with him. Tea was set on a round table under the oleander-tree in the little court, and there Mabel

poured it out in dear little handleless cups, waited on by Captain Rowan, Dr. Halkett, the Honourable Bob, and the elegant Ginger.

It was all like a dream to Amphlett Jones.

The ripple of laughter; the happy chit-chat of people all interested in the same topics; the shaded rooms; the glimpse of the court with its solitary tree, laden with pink, wax-like blossoms; the graceful figure in the cloud-coloured dress, the supple waist girt by the silver belt, the deft, white hands so busy among the tea-cups, the soft brown eyes looking here and there to be sure no guest was overlooked.

How new it all was to him; how infinitely charming! How difficult it would be to give Dodson any real notion of what it was like!

Of course he should try; but he felt the effort would be a lame one; and Dodson would go down to the grave with his eyes unenlightened as to what the true state of the case had been: Mr. Jones could not help thinking to himself how happy they all seemed, more especially the Major. They all enjoyed their tea so much too. It struck Mr. Jones as being rather an unsubstantial meal; but it was evidently the right thing, and nothing more expected.

He thought the young fellows, in loose white linen tunics, and dark forage-caps, were having a fine time of it out there, sitting about Miss Mabel like butterflies about a flower, and handing the cups as she filled them to the Honourable Bob, who was here, there, and everywhere, and quite the life and spirit of the party. She was very like the picture—only more beautiful—or, rather, the picture was very like her, only not beautiful enough. The tree with the sweet pale blossoms seemed quite the right sort of thing to wave above her head. The open glass doors with creepers on either side and hanging from above, made a frame for the picture beyond—a picture far prettier, and more bewildering than the one upon the easel, since in this was light and life and colour.

From all of which things it will be understood that Jones of Seething Lane was going at a pace that would have made Dodson's hair stand on end.

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BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Vexation," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

AT about three o'clock the next afternoon the Cornish household, which had spent the morning in a state of sympathetic excitement and expectancy, subsided into satisfied quietude. Roger had arrived in time for lunch, looking radiant and triumphant, but he had said nothing as to the result of his absence; his family understood that Selma was to hear all about it first, and withdrew to compare notes on Selma's expression of bliss during lunch, to tell one another how glad they were that Roger had come back, and to speculate as to the news he had brought.

The lovers, left to themselves after a parting of a whole week, concerned themselves at first neither with the future nor with the past; and when the present ceased to be all-sufficient for them, lengthy experiences had to be exchanged as to the desolation of the last six days, and much consolation to be given and received before anything so comparatively matter-of-fact as future prospects could be thought of. At last Selma leant back against him as they sat together on the sofa with a little sigh of absolute contentment; and, as he looked down into her sweet face, he moved her a little, suddenly and diffidently, that the light might fall more directly upon her, and said, anxiously:

"Sweetheart, why do you look so tired?"

She opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

"Do I look tired?" she said, dreamily. "It must be dissipation, I'm afraid. I did not sleep well; I had dreams——"

She broke off suddenly, her face changed, and she moved so that he did not see it for a moment. Then she turned to him suddenly, and nestled very close to him, as she said:

"You haven't told me yet anything about what you've been doing."

"I've been thinking about you."

"All day and every day?"

"All day and every day."

"That must have been very bad for business."

She laughed, a low, delighted, musical laugh, and Roger echoed it, as he said:

"No, it was first-rate for business. Things have turned out far better than I expected."

He spoke with the triumphant and important tone of a man who has something to tell, and Selma moved interestedly, and sat up, leaving both her hands in his, and waiting eagerly for his next words.

"I won't go into a lot of business details," he said. "It would bother you, wouldn't it? But I've arranged an exchange—a very good exchange. I give up my berth in Nelson, and sign a contract with a firm here, which means a first-class position in a few years' time, and something to offer my darling now."

His voice was full of happiness, and Selma's flushed face was radiant, as she cried:

"Oh, Roger, really and truly? You are not giving up anything to stay in England? You are quite satisfied?"

"I should be hard to please if I were not," he answered, with a ringing laugh.

"You know I would not risk the future—I would sooner wait for you, my darling; but this is far better than anything I could have hoped for in Nelson. You have brought me good luck."

He lifted her hands to his lips as he spoke, but she bent towards him impulsively, and pressed her cheek against his.

"I would like to," she murmured, girlishly. "Oh, Roger, you know I would like to."

There was a little silence, and then Roger moved, and put his hand into his pocket.

"I wanted to bring you something," he said, diffidently; "only I could not find anything really good enough for you. I—do you like it?"

He had been opening a little packet as he spoke, his strong, man's fingers absolutely shaking with nervousness, and with the last words he produced a little pearl bracelet, dainty and slender as the little wrist at which he glanced as he put it into her hand.

"Oh, Roger," she cried, as she took it and the hand that gave it her together. "Oh, how sweet of you! Like it! It's a perfect duck."

"Is it what you like?" he asked, anxiously. "I saw it in a window, and I thought it was pretty. But nothing ever seems to me pretty enough for you, Selma. Everything that comes near you ought to be like you."

"Dearest!" she answered, softly and impulsively, looking up from the little bracelet into the simple, adoring eyes that met hers, "you think too much of me in every way. There is nothing you should love me for, Roger, except that I love you. And I should love anything you gave me—you know that," she went on, when he released her, which was not soon. "Even if it wasn't the sweetest thing I ever saw, as this is. Put it on for me."

He hesitated a moment, and then he said:

"Look at the inside, Selma."

"The inside? Oh! Why, there's something written, Roger—a date. November the second. That's to-day!"

She had risen, as she spoke, that she might hold the bracelet in a better light, and she turned to him as she finished, with soft, enquiring eyes. He rose, too, and stood very close to her, not touching her, however, as he said:

"Yes, it's to-day. Can't you guess how I want to think of to-day?"

She thought a moment, with her eyes fixed on the mysterious date, and then she whispered, happily:

"It's the day when you came back to me."

"No, it's not that. I don't mean that. I want it to be more. Selma," he drew a step nearer, and gathered both her hands into his own, "tell me to-day when it may be."

There was a little inarticulate sound of confusion, the wondering eyes changed suddenly, and Selma had drawn back a step, her lovely crimson face bent very low.

"Oh, Roger!" she murmured.

"My darling, why should we wait! That you should care for a fellow like me is what I never can explain; but—you do. And I—Selma, I want my wife."

"Your wife!" She lifted her head with a sudden start, and looked at him for an instant, her very throat crimson with the swift rush of colour the word had produced, her eyes half-startled, half-pleased, as if with a new and wonderful idea. "Your wife!" she repeated, in a voice in which pride, excitement, happiness, and shyness were inextricably blended. "Your wife! Oh, Roger!"

He drew her into his arms with an assurance of touch which he had never used to her before, and she yielded to him with a vague thrill, of which her youthful excitement was hardly conscious.

"Does it sound strange to you, darling?" he said. "I have said it to myself, over and over again, till I've hardly been able to believe in my luck. My wife!"

She hid her face for a moment on his shoulder, and then she lifted it again, glowing with happy, proud confusion.

"It—it takes one's breath away," she whispered.

She looked more like a sensitive, enthusiastic child than a woman, as she let her arms rest so gently on his shoulders, and her eyes only got brighter and happier as he said again:

"Why should we wait, dearest! Tell me when? In a month?"

"Roger!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands as they met behind his head, with a little emphatic gesture of protestation. "In a month! It's most utterly impossible!"

"Six weeks, then! Two months! To-day is the second of November. The second of January, darling!"

"Oh, Roger!" with a world of hesitation and indecision in her voice. And then she added quickly, with a laugh in her eyes:

"It's a Sunday!"

"It's not! It's a Tuesday! Say it shall be then."

He held her very close, and, as she met the honest blue eyes, she laid her face down with a gesture of childish devotion on his shoulder.

"Yes," she whispered.

"My darling!" A moment later he drew one of her hands down, and alighted the bracelet on the little wrist, and as he did so she lifted a very rosy face, and watched his fingers.

"I shall wear it always and always," she said, softly. "And I shall love it almost like myring. Oh, Roger!" with a sudden change of voice, as the clock on the mantelpiece struck five. "Listen! I thought it was very dark. Oh, they will be bringing tea. I must go! I must go and tell Helen!"

He held her fast for an instant more.

"I may tell my mother!" he said.

"Oh, yes; you may do as you like. Only let me go! I must tell Helen!" She returned his kisses with innocent, undisguised favour, and then she was gone.

She fled upstairs, with bent head, and the step of a very fugitive, to the room she shared with Helen, opened the door with noiseless haste as though a moment's pause was intolerable to her, and the thought of drawing attention to her unprotected self by any sound was not to be borne, shut it behind her almost in the same instant, and threw herself into her sister's arms before Helen was well aware that she was near.

"Oh, Nell," she cried. "Oh, Nell, Nell!"

Helen was well used to such demonstrations on Selma's part. Reserve, where she was sure of love and sympathy, had never been one of the latter's characteristics; and through all her life her easily excited, emotional temperament had been accustomed to find an outlet in Helen's arms—arms which were always ready to hold her, however little Helen fathomed her emotion at the moment. In the bright, practical consolation or sympathy with which Helen met all her sister's despairs or enthusiasms Selma felt only the love, and was always soothed by it, never missing the comprehension which her sister could not give her.

She hid her face upon Helen's shoulder

now as she had hidden it many times before, and Helen pressed a warm, cheery kiss upon the dark hair as she said:

"Well, have you made up for all the week, dear?"

"I've got something to tell you, Nell!"

"Something special!"

"Something very special. He—I—we—Nell, the second of January!"

"Oh, Selma!"

The soft round cheek was pressed against the dark head, and for a moment the sisters clung close together, and were very still. Then Helen lifted her head, winked her blue eyes rather suspiciously once or twice, and sat down, drawing Selma down on the floor at her side.

"It's quite settled?" she said, brightly. "I am so glad, dear, so very, very glad. How busy we shall all have to be!"

Selma raised her head excitedly, squeezing her sister's hands in both her own as she rested them on Helen's knee.

"It seems a very little time, doesn't it?" she said in a delighted, awestruck voice. "He—he was in such a dreadful hurry!"

"In too much hurry, Selma!"

The flushed face went down upon the clasped hands precipitately, and Selma said, half laughing, half crying: "I don't know, Nell. Oh, Nellie!" As she lifted herself up suddenly, and flung her arms round her sister's neck with a little excited cry: "I can't believe it's true! It seems too good to be true!"

Helen laughed; but, in spite of herself, her laugh ended in a little sigh, and Selma suddenly unclasped her hands, and let them fall again on her knee as she knelt back on the floor.

"Oh, what a selfish girl I am," she cried, remorsefully, under her breath. "Oh, Nell, darling, shall we wait until you and Humphrey can be married too? Oh, you must be dreadfully unhappy!"

Helen drew her close, and laid her cheek so that Selma should not see her face.

"No, dear," she said softly and quickly, "I didn't mean to sigh. I'm quite content to wait as long as we must wait. It's only now and then!"

"Will it be long?" said the fresh, pitying, young voice.

"Yes, dear."

Selma made a little inarticulate moan over her as if such a state of things was too terrible to contemplate.

"It does seem so unfair!" she cried, at last. "Everything is perfect with Roger and me, we haven't to wait or anything,

and we've only known one another two months—just think, Helen, two months ago I hardly knew there was Roger in the world. And you and Humphrey have cared so long! Oh, it makes me feel quite wicked."

But Helen was her own hopeful matter-of-fact self again, and she kissed away the two bright tears which stood in the lovely, grieving eyes.

"Goose!" she said, brightly, "you haven't anything at all to do with it. Come, we must go downstairs to tea. Does auntie know?"

"Roger—I said he might tell her," answered Selma, sorely divided between the thrilling interest of her own affairs, and loving pity for her sister; but the former became for the moment all absorbing as Helen, having smoothed the ruffled hair in a practical, business-like way, drew her towards the door.

"Oh, Helen, must I go down so soon?" she said. "Oh, suppose they all know!"

It was quite impossible to doubt that they all did know as Selma and Helen went into the drawing-room together—Selma, with very flushed face and downcast eyes, trying to appear unconscious of the universal exclamation which greeted her, "Here she is!"

They were all there; Mrs. Cornish, pouring out tea, Sylvia, Nettie, sundry other cousins—even little Elsie. And, in addition to this strong muster of Cornishes, there was a little figure in a seal-skin hat and coat, which sprang up as the sisters came in and cast itself precipitately upon Selma, crying, in a little, quick, eager voice:

"Oh, dearest thing, how glad I am to see you!"

"Mervyn!" exclaimed Selma and Helen simultaneously; and Helen added, as Selma was rendered temporarily incapable of speech by a rapid series of speechless, eloquent kisses:

"I didn't know you'd come back. How nice!"

Mervyn Dallas was the only daughter of an old friend of Mr. Cornish. She had been motherless from her babyhood, and when she was a wild, erratic little schoolgirl, Mrs. Cornish had been always very good to her, and she had spent nearly as much time in the Cornishes' house as in her own father's. She had been sent abroad to school when she was about fifteen, and had come home two years later to be her own mistress, and

the mistress of her father's house, just at the time when Helen and Selma were established in the little Hampstead house. She had come back two years older in years than when she went away; but she had altered hardly perceptibly, and she had taken up all her old ways with the Cornish girls as though two days instead of two years had passed, running in and out of the house at all hours of the day, always full of excited interest in all their doings, always demanding and obtaining sympathy for her own enthusiasm, teased by the boys, laughed at by the girls, and loved and petted in a careless, protecting fashion by the whole household. Being so much with their cousins, she had of course seen a great deal of Helen and Selma, and her first admiration of the latter had speedily developed into enthusiastic devotion. Her adoration from the first had been perfectly frank and unconcealed, and had no trace about it of the awe with which Selma was regarded by her cousins. And Selma, taken by surprise, had let herself be worshipped, half laughing and half touched, had been sweet and gracious to her devotee—as she was to every one with whom she came in contact—and had gradually grown very fond of the little thing.

She returned her kisses now, laughing a little, and blushing very much, for the pressure of Mervyn's small hands conveyed a great deal that could not be said in public, and then the latter drew back, and said, as a sort of explanatory apology to every one, with a shy glance in particular at Roger:

"It's so exciting for me, you see—not to know anything at all about it, and then to come in like this and find you all talking about the wedding-day. Oh, Selma, I am to be a bridesmaid, am I not? How you can all have been so very horrid as not to write to me I can't think!"

"We didn't know where you were!" said Sylvia.

"That's nothing to do with it, Sylvia. I mean you might have written somewhere, and I should have got it."

She had been travelling abroad all the summer and autumn with her father, and during the last two months their movements had been so uncertain, that the Cornishes really had not known where to write to her; though, no doubt—as Mervyn's last incoherent speech was intended to imply—they might have found out if they had not very much preferred

the idea of telling her by word of mouth, and enjoying her excitement—always a standing joke with the whole household.

She had a quick, impulsive little way of speaking, the natural expression of an enthusiastic, quickly-beating little heart, and her little, thin, brown, childish face seemed at the moment to be all eager, brown eyes. She was unusually small, with tiny hands and feet, and her figure looked more like that of a child than of a girl of eighteen; her hair, too—rough, curly, brown hair—seemed to accommodate itself with difficulty to the “done-up” stage, and was always tumbling about, to be unceremoniously seized and tucked away again.

“It’s always all ends when anything happens,” she exclaimed, quaintly, now, when Helen took hold of her, and tucked sundry stray curling bits under her hat, as Selma turned to Mrs. Cornish, who was waiting for her with a beaming smile.

“So it’s all quite settled,” she said. “My dear child, I’m delighted. I don’t like long engagements,” with a pitying look, which Helen fortunately did not see; “and I’m thankful to think that there is no need for you, at any rate, to wait. Come and sit down here, dear child. The children are wild with excitement; and if you don’t let them talk about bridesmaids’ dresses, I don’t know what they’ll do.”

And Mrs. Cornish, who seemed scarcely less excited than “the children”—which generic term embraced Sylvia and Elsie alike—themselves, drew Selma down on to the sofa beside her, as Roger offered her the cup of tea which he had annexed, in her behalf, directly she appeared. She raised a flushed face and a shy pair of eyes to him in thanks; and then she stooped, and held out her hand to Elsie. This little sister had rewarded Roger’s exertions in the wood with devoted attachment, and she was clinging to him now with one hand, while she embraced a large doll—just brought to her by Mervyn Dallas—with the other.

“Come and kiss me, Elsie,” said Selma, rather incoherently.

Elsie dropped Roger’s hand, and trotted obediently up. But she did not give the expected kiss. She stood gravely in front of her cousin with serious, uplifted face, and said:

“Please, Selma, may Elsie be Woger’s bridesmaid?”

There was a shriek of laughter at this

confusion of ideas; and as “Woger” lifted his bridesmaid on to his shoulder, Selma felt that she had hardly effected the diversion she intended. And after the laugh every one began to talk at once, and Selma had nothing to do but sit blushing and smiling, and turning her shining eyes from one to the other until, upon a perfect babel of voices, Mervyn Dallas leading, and the Cornish girls acting chorus, the door opened and closed quietly, and Helen—the only one who had heard it—turned quickly, with a happy smile, as Humphrey came up to where she was sitting.

“Has anything happened?” he observed, quietly, dropping the remark into the first pause of the chatter.

Nobody, except Helen, had noticed his entrance, and every one turned to him with an exclamation of surprise.

“How uncanny,” said Mervyn Dallas as she shook hands with him. “Yes, something very thrilling has happened. Selma is going to be married!”

“So I have heard,” he remarked, with a slight, amused smile at her excited face.

“Yes; but directly, this minute—I mean on the second of January.”

“Is that so?” He turned to his brother with a quick glance of enquiry, which altered, as Roger made a delighted gesture of acquiescence, to one of infinite congratulation; and then he turned again to Helen with a look which no one else saw, and which she answered with a smile which said, as plainly as any words could have done, “Patience!”

“Oh, dear, I don’t want to go a bit,” said Mervyn Dallas, pathetically; “but I really must you know. Good-bye, Mrs. Cornish, isn’t it exciting? Good-bye, dearest darling,” to Selma with an enthusiastic hug, and then she came to Roger and stopped short. “Good-bye,” she said, shyly, giving him her hand; and then, with a little burst of confidence, “Oh, you don’t know how much I congratulate you.”

He accepted the congratulation in all simplicity, and went to open the hall door for her as she went out of the room escorted by all the younger Cornishes, leaving Mrs. Cornish, Helen, Selma, and Humphrey. Mrs. Cornish had something she wished to talk over with Helen, and they went away together—very little consideration was shown to Helen and Humphrey now that it was an established fact that their engagement might last for years—Roger was caught in the hall by Sylvia, who was very fond of him, and had given him up to

Selma heartily, but with a struggle, and Selma and Humphrey were left alone.

He stood for a minute or two looking into the fire rather sadly, and then he roused himself and said:

"I am very glad to hear that it is settled, Selma!"

"It is very sweet of you!" answered Selma, impulsively. "I feel as if you must quite hate us."

He smiled as though the words were not worth a more serious answer, and said, with a different tone and manner as though to change the current of her thoughts: "I've been to hear Moritz this afternoon. He is giving two concerts this month you know."

"Moritz!" Selma hardly uttered the word, and he did not notice that she had changed colour suddenly, though he had been looking at her with that expression of speculation with which he always contemplated the new Selma. He was the only member of his family to whom she had become, instead of ceasing to be, incomprehensible.

"You should go and hear him, Selma!" he went on, speaking with an enthusiasm he very seldom showed, except to Selma and Helen. "He is an artist! If he perseveres——"

He was interrupted by a little, sharp sigh, as Selma laid her hand suddenly on his arm.

"Don't, Humphrey!" she said, quickly. And then she stopped herself and laughed, rather uncertainly. "It's very nasty of me, I'm afraid," she said; "but—I don't like to hear about people who persevere!"

And before he had well taken in her meaning she was gone.

ON SOLITUDE.

I ONCE heard a gentleman say that to understand the meaning of the word "solitude" a man should marry. But he was a thought cynical, and his wife and he had not much in common. Moreover, he had married late in life, and his children were little likely ever to have a community of interest with him.

This being so, one can sympathise with him and his apparent paradox. For out of the question it is solitude of the most absolute and hateful kind to live ever in the society of those with whom we are not in sympathy or who are positively uncongenial to us. Do not the hundreds of

letters in the newspapers on the problems of marriage prove it to the hilt! The writers are fearfully inked. They feel that the society which by their own formal acts and the laws of convention they are bound to keep, is a real restraint upon their own development. Life is rather negative than positive with them. And so they grieve, and would welcome the solitude of divorce with amazing gladness.

These words, of course, apply as much to women as to men. Perhaps, indeed, more so. For women are worst to suffer more in such a case. They have fewer interests outside the home. And every room of the house, every article in it, and the very sound of the voices of the children are but a myriad of echoes of the wail in the woman's heart—"I am alone." A man can naturally more readily shake off the consciousness of this disappointment. The moment he breathes the air of his domain, he realises—or may realise—that he is a citizen of the world as well as a husband and a father. But the time has not yet come when the woman also can toss aside her cares as a child throws off his bed-clothes when the morning sun shines in upon him.

Goethe writes somewhere about solitude being a pleasure like health—only perceived when lost. There's no doubt about it; to some of us it is a real joy. Not because it enables us to isolate ourselves from our fellow-creatures, and run into the woods and deserts for the satisfaction of beating our breasts and shouting to the winds that we are miserable wretches, unfit for heaven or earth. Oh, dear, no. In the nineteenth century, we are a good deal wiser than to take so depraved a view of our nature. Since the date one Aeneas Domini there never was a time when the doctrine of Pelagius was more cheerfully accepted. We, of these stout, late days in the world's history, are not at all prone to feel oppressed by our innate iniquity. As for the sin of Adam and Eve, we positively refuse to be accountable for it. Such as we are, we maintain we were meant to be. 'Tis no use kicking against the pricks.

Thus when we profess a liking for solitude, it is a liking on a par with our liking for pictures, beautiful scenery, a pretty face, or truffles. Not a passion by any means. Zimmermann loved solitude passionately, and he died mad. Our lunatic asylums have a fair population of Zimmermanns. No; we have the good

sense to regard solitude as but one of the many excellent provisions made for our enjoyment of the life we are destined to live. We should be bored unconscionably if we had to pass all our days in a picture-gallery, though it contained the master-pieces of all the planets in the universe. Though a man have ever so obliging a stomach, he cannot feed on oysters and champagne hour after hour.

So with his abilities, the larger the programme a man puts before himself for his life's work, the more profit and fun he is likely to get out of existence. Solitude ought to be included in the programme—for many reasons. Just as Winkelmann used to set aside so many hours for quiet reflection about the jeyousness of Italian life, so I think many of us—would I could say all—may be counselled to get into our innermost shells at regular intervals to think a little about the past, the present, and the future. There will, perhaps, be a touch or two of the disagreeable in this methodical realisation of our standing with ourselves and the world. If there is more than a touch or two, it is an emphatic proof that we must on no account omit to take our doses of solitude regularly. By thus persisting in them it will be with us as with the sick child condemned to cod-liver oil. At first the stuff is horrid—sickening. Anon, however, it grows to the palate of the invalid, who gets to like it. And, besides, it does him a rare amount of good.

On the other hand, though in the loneliness of our studies we may find solitude under these conditions somewhat trying to our dignity and pride, when we go abroad in the world unattended it is altogether different. Then we are on a par with Hassan Al Raschid and many another great man who went among the commonalty in domino. We suspend our own individuality, and live objectively in the lives of others. So did Victor Hugo when he rode about Paris on the tops of omnibuses watching the vicissitudes of the alama. It is rarely invigorating. For the time we do not consume our own vitality, but inhale the vitality of others. The world is our oyster, and it is at any rate capital exercise to stab the oyster-shell even if we do not eventually succeed in opening it.

Besides, what fine teaching these solitary rambles amid our working brethren can offer us! To be sure, the didactic element is often a great nuisance. There it is,

however, and, upon the whole, it seems sensible rather to bow civilly to it on our way to entertainment, pure and simple, than set our noses at an angle of contempt, and proceed uneasily to our bourne. You may have cut your thumb, and been much distressed for an hour about the tragic deed and the blood you lost. What then? Is a cut thumb worth repining about, when you see a man run over in the street in a successful attempt to save the life of a little child at play before the hoofs of the horses? Or you may be uncommonly distressed because that United Association of Stay-Makers (Limited), have declared a dividend for the past half-year of but seven per cent. per annum, as against the previous half-year's eight per cent. Is that such a great matter, when you find yourself running against a poor, hollow-cheeked woman with five farthings in her hand, upon which she relies for the bread to farm her and her children's dinner?

You don't notice these things when you walk with a friend, or, if so, they have but a passing effect upon you. 'Tis possible, too, your companion is a man of unkindly mould. The five farthings serve him for a jest: "The slattern has drunk the rest in twopennyworths of gin in the tavern at the corner; her red nose shows it!" The man whose arm is broken in saving the child is a shrewd fellow: "Ten to one he insured himself in the Accidental Company the day before yesterday!"

It may be as palpably absurd as you please. No matter; the bloom of the rose has gone. The first fragrance of the violet of pity and heartfelt sympathy has departed. But it would not have been so had you been alone.

There is grit in that old monkish saying, which has won the approval of so many lofty minds since it was uttered: "Never less alone than when alone!" Saint Vincent de Paul loved it. Cardinal Newman echoed it. Every man of a reflective turn makes it his own. Is it not obvious why? Such as these build up the fabric of their individuality in solitude. It is a Gothic pile of allying grace, and every hour of musing adds a pinnacle to it. Thus pondering about the web of the world—they themselves being at the heart of the web—and the myriads of men who have been caught in the tissue, they do at any rate keep themselves aloof from sundry of those mundane temptations which might tie them fast by the leg, even

as their fellow men are tied in the web. The good idea they have of themselves is not perhaps untrue, for they could hardly be monsters of depravity and tolerate the solitude they love. "A man," we are told, "can do without his own approbation in much society, but he must make great exertions to gain it when he lives alone. Without it, I am convinced, solitude is not to be endured." But, all the same, their indulgence does not procure them complete happiness. The sudden entrance of a mortal like themselves may all at once tumble their Gothic pile to the ground; and, in a moment, the modest pride they felt in their own personality will have given place to unreasonable shame for they know not what.

It is probably because they have been guilty of the heresy of sacrificing action to thought. These are a brace of steeds that ought to run together in harness; not tandem, but side by side, as evenly as may be. Thus the driver ought to cover a good deal of ground, ere his tired arms throw down the reins.

By this sacrifice they confer a sort of exotic delicacy upon their natures. So they may always be in the snug philosophic calm of their own chambers, well and good. But set them outside in the work-a-day atmosphere, and they shrivel and pine—perhaps even die.

They have the best of it who, on one side of their house, look into the bustle and human stir of Piccadilly, while on the other side they have cool grots, and meadows, and woodlands, which echo with the sound of no human voice save their own. Or, perhaps, considering how we are made, it would be well to moderate the isolation of their rustic retreat. Cowper will do it for us fitly:

How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude!
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper, Solitude is sweet.

It is a patent bull; but it may pass; for, except the downright giants among us, we are not constituted to go through life alone.

Werter, whose famous "Sorrows" people don't read nowadays, was a fair type of the average youth of sensibility to whom solitude in an inordinate degree is deadly poison. The modern athletic young man knows little or nothing of the woes that poor Werter suffered. Thanks are due to our precious field sports and physical exercises that it is so. But there are still—as there always will be—not a few of our

younger brothers with a constitutional twist in the direction Werter went to his ruin. They may be counselled to take warning by Werter—to face the world manfully and not to brood in secret over the little griefs that begin with adolescence to buzz about their crania; otherwise, in the natural order of things, each affliction will assume a huge mask, which will monstrously exaggerate its own modest features, and so, perchance, frighten the man into an early grave.

Who was it that said his home was any room in which he could draw a bolt across the door? Whoever he was, he ought to have been a plucky fellow, with a well-stocked mind. And yet, as we have seen, there isn't so much difference between this positive isolation and the association with a world in which one is content for the time to sink all thought of one's individuality, and live with others. It is but another way of getting at the same goal. It doesn't follow that the man who was so fond of bolting his fellow-creatures outside his room was hard of heart and misanthropic. Besides, I dare say he would have shuddered at the idea that he should be compelled to live out all his days thus alone.

The girl who rejects the advances of an admirer does not thereby show her contempt for all mankind.

By the way, as showing how solitude grows to the heart that takes to it, is it not remarkable how old maids and bachelors get to love their loneliness? At first, especially in the case of those of our sisters who, for one cause and another, do not enter the blissful but perilous gates of matrimony, their life seems horribly sombre and dull. It appears to them nothing less than a cruelty that no man has approached them with the invitation to share his home. They ask, sadly, even peevishly: "Of what use is our life! Is there any pleasure or profit in thus going through the daily round unaccompanied!"

But after a time the habit has become like a warm cloak in winter to them. They would hesitate long before determining to cast it aside, even if they would, on any account, discard it. There's a certain joy in being lord of one's own actions and thoughts. It may be foolish to dream day-dreams; but it is pleasant. And so the numerous old maids of the land for the most part sit and look on at the lives of the married and younger members of the community. Certain foolish young wives may affect to

despise them. But they can afford to be indifferent to such childishness. They are like the war correspondent, perched on the hill overlooking the field in which a battle is raging. He is not a combatant; but he sees better than all the combatants, save two or three, how the battle is going. They are also like the Red Cross sisterhood, who now and again tread softly into the midst of the fray, and carry off a wounded man to tend him.

Such solitude as theirs seems to me a vast deal more noble than that of the strictest order of Trappists, who padlock their tongues, and live in the world as if it were merely a somewhat roomy and well-ventilated coffin.

AROUND THE NEW FOREST.

SEATED opposite in the "smoker" that forms a component part of the Pullman train whirling away towards the west, is a stout, florid, jolly-looking man, whom, from the fact of his portly Gladstone bag being crammed full of legal-looking papers, neatly arranged in convenient bundles, one would be disposed to classify as a country lawyer, who has been doing a little business in town, and is now returning to his own happy hunting grounds. As he proceeds to utilise the flying moments, as busy lawyers will, by looking over his papers, it is something of a surprise when, instead of brief or affidavit, there flutters out a sheet of rustling paper, covered with the plan, sections and elevation—if that be the correct word—of a fine three-hundred-ton steam yacht. Each little bundle of papers represents a yacht of some kind or other, and in this way our friend carries a whole fleet about with him, stowed away in that capacious sack of his, like one of the wizards of the old Norse legends. And he, too, like the swallows, as yet unseen, and cuckoo, unheard, or the shy primroses in the hedge bank, is a harbinger of the coming summer. People are beginning to stir in their winter dens; they are planning cruises here and there; and in the rivers and harbours, where clusters of pleasure-craft have been shivering at their moorings the long winter through, there is a general overhauling, scraping, and painting going on, topmasts are hoisted, sails hung out to air, and a note of preparation rings in the air.

This awakening element is presented in full force as, of a sudden, Southampton

Water opens on the view; the tide full in, light breaking through the clouds, and reflected hazily from the expanse of waters, where white sails gleam here and there, with wafts of steam from great steamers, that seem to be hanging betwixt sea and sky. Yet the moment of brightness and illumination was, after all, premature; a chill wind ruffled the waters, and cold shadows crept over the scene before it disappeared, so that one sees it shut out of view without much regret. Rather than the forest of masts, let us have the genuine forest of trees, where there may be shelter from nipping winds, and sunny nooks where one may safely bask upon the dried and withered bracken.

And the forest is not far to seek. In ancient days the boundary of the New Forest on this side was formed by Southampton Water, and although these boundaries have shrunk a good deal since, there are many pleasant woodland glimpses to be had as the train passes on. Grassy glades are studded with fine old trees, whose interlacing branches, embrowned with the buds of coming leaves, but hardly yet showing a tinge of green, frame pleasant pictures of old English life. Here are meadows and tranquil river, and the old farm-house, with barns and stacks clustered about it, an instantaneous picture, which vanishes before it is fairly seen. And then comes Brockenhurst, which is said to be in the heart of the New Forest, but which does not at once suggest ideas of rest and retirement.

For here is rather a bustling junction, with book-stalls and refreshment rooms in full swing; and all of us who are not going on to Bournemouth must here turn out and join the little throng upon the platform. Here cheerful greetings are exchanged, while porters wheel about great piles of luggage, and people drive off in carriages and omnibuses, just as if we were in the heart of Cognac, instead of being in the heart of the forest. Surveying the scene as if he saw it not, stands an ancient of other days, in well-worn cords and leggings, who is accompanied by a restless dog of curriah appearance, and as lame as a dog can be; but who has no more idea of giving in than old Benbow. One thinks of Gurth the swineherd's dog, and of the rigid forest law that maimed everybody's dog but the King's. But the old drover, for such he is, has no such romantic explanation to give of the defect of his faithful hound.

"'Twas distemper left that upon 'un," says cheery old Gurth; "but him's worth his weight in gold, for all that. You see un after a drove of cattle! him don't remember to be lame then, bless'ee."

And the old drover has reminiscences of Brockenhurst before there was a railway at all, and when it was just a few cottages in the wood, and long after the railway came, when a wooden shed did duty for the station, and a passenger was rather an event.

But when a few days have elapsed, and Brockenhurst is revisited, the village itself is found to be quiet enough, scattered about a pleasant, wooded road. The country about is cultivated, and enclosed with patches of timber here and there. Then the river is crossed, dimpling under the arches of the bridge. It is the Lymington river, for it has no other name as far as one can gather than that derived from the town at its mouth. And before us stretches the road for miles.

Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks, the long, straight highway is driven with uncompromising directness through the forest which rises on either hand. There are paths and trackways among the withered bracken which enable one to escape from the monotony of the too straight road; although bramble and briars and prickly thorn and holly-bushes do their best to keep up seclusion in the forest. But the margin of wilderness is not very extensive, for soon appear the palings of the New Park, and on the other side a range of enclosures. The enclosures are, in fact, plantations surrounded by fences, and they are generally accessible through gates placed here and there, but they offer no temptation for the pedestrian in their formal rows of pine or beech of the same age and pattern throughout. And the New Park, with fine timber, and pleasant glades all about it, is really comparatively new; that is, it was enclosed by order of Charles the Second, who there introduced a new description of deer from the French forests. At a later date the park was utilised in growing hay for the winter fodder of the deer, who increased in such numbers that they suffered severely in long winters.

To return to the New Park and our way along its palings, beyond which there is a wilder, more open region, with groups of forest trees scattered about, and thorn and holly-bushes growing in great luxuriance. Here is silence and solitude, if you like—a

silence which may be felt unbroken by any of the usual sounds of country life. No dog barks, or cock crows, there is no song of birds, nor lowing of kine, nor summer hum of insects. Not a hare or a rabbit scuttles across the path, nor is there to be heard the cry of hounds distant or growing near. Resting on the mossy trunk of a fallen tree one fancies that the old times have come back, that outlaws may be lurking in the brake, or that the cloud of dust which rises from the distant track denotes that the Red King and his train are riding through, or perhaps the chief justice in Eyre, perambulating the forest, and dealing out swift doom to offenders against the forest laws. In passing through the forest all honest men are enjoined to wind a horn at intervals, as a notice that they have no covert or evil designs. But we have no horns to blow, and if the King and his men should come our way how shall we answer it? A cloudy darkness creeps over the tree tops, and the wind sounds a doleful murmur in the branches. Dead bracken and the brown leaves of autumn show the forest paths, which are often only pony-tracks leading to some succulent clump of herbage.

The highway is lonely, too, and yet not unfrequented. Here comes a tranter with his pony and cart; the tranter being a character almost confined to regions of wastes and commons. He earns his living with his pony and cart, purveying firewood faggots, litter and fodder, for the inhabitants of more settled regions, or taking a job of any kind that may be going. A pleasant, cheery kind of man he is as a general rule, with his cottage somewhere by a common, a fruitful wife, and a troop of shaggy-headed children; with his cow, no beauty to look at, but a good one for the pail, and his prolific pigs of the Berkshire breed, he makes head against the troublesome demands of existence with cheerful independence.

When the tranter has passed, after a long interval, succeeds a small farmer on the forest, small as to his freehold that is, but big and portly in his person. He jumps out of his cart at the rise of the hill, and his stout little horse steps out sturdily with its load of wuzzel.

"Wouldn't mind a drop of rain," says the farmer, surveying the darkened sky with critical eye, "for feed be terrible short along with wa."

And now it is a family one-horse shay, with mother as charioteer, and a

cluster of children packed inside. Again, here comes a dark, handsome fellow, bearded like the pard, with dark Spanish eyes, and curling locks crowned by a brigandish felt hat. Down to the wrist his attire is as sober as a parson's—black out-away coat, and quasi-clerical waistcoat, contrivances of velvety cord, finished off by sporting-looking drab gaiters, and thick shooting-boots. He is as well dressed as a country squire, and looks every bit as proud, and he is driving an open cart loaded with poles and canvas, and a big mallet, and sundry articles hidden by the canvas. He might be a wandering artist, or perhaps he is a sporting publican who is going to set up his booth on some distant racecourse, or perhaps he is a proprietor of cocoa-nut shies.

Tramping along, and rising with a gradual ascent, past bush and briar, gnarled oak and lichen-covered beech, by swampy coverts, where polypody ferns fringe the branches of the trees to the topmost bough, the long vista comes to an end at last, the forest opens, the well-kept grounds of Foxlease stretch out on one hand, and a church spire appears before us on the summit of a lofty mound.

This is Lyndhurst church, a pretty, charmed church, all dight with marble and rich colouring. It is one of the prettiest of modern churches, with a noble fresco in the way of an altar-piece, painted and given by Sir Frederick Leighton—who is a native of the region—and representing the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The church is open all day long, and an almost continual stream of people visit it, chiefly of the female sex; and an alms-bbox at the door requests a penny from the visitor, without excluding coins of a higher denomination.

Lyndhurst—the Linden wood—is a pretty, bright little town, with good shops; but there is nothing particularly picturesque about it, unless it be the old King's house, which dates perhaps from Charles the Second's time, with the old hall where the verderers of the forest hold their courts. And there hangs the stirrup said to have belonged to the Red King, which has come to be adopted as the forest badge.

There is a way back to Brockenhurst by a devious path through the forest, starting from the common, a breezy, open ground, where are visible sundry old tumuli, and the butts of the rifle-range; and over the hill the old racecourse of Lyndhurst, and the

golfing-links where the young men and maidens of Lyndhurst are vying with each other in driving the little white ball into maddening and insuperable difficulties. A friend suggests a family likeness between Lyndhurst Common and Wimbledon; but the latter is, in essence, wilder and more savage-looking than pleasant Lyndhurst.

The gate to the forest path is well contrived to dodge the intrusive tourist, and put him off the trail; but the people you meet are pleasant and obliging, and so extremely clear in the way of giving information, that such impediments are minimised. The only difficulty is, when fairly into the forest, that the track sometimes forks in a very even manner, with either branch apparently as well frequented as the other, while the wrong one may lead into a thorny brake, or soft, plashy bog. But as long as the sun is above the horizon, a way can be steered without much regard to path or track. But it would not be pleasant to be overtaken by darkness in the midst of the forest, like Tom Thumb and his brethren.

But Brockenhurst is reached once more, and another morning brings us by train to Ringwood, which is some miles to the westward of the actual forest. The little town is encompassed by green, fertile meadows, and the pretty river Avon winds past in many a curve and fold, while pleasant residences and warm-looking, comfortable farm-houses are scattered about. The road towards the forest is pleasant enough, winding among fields and hedgerows, ascending on the whole, and affording happy glimpses of the Avon valley, with the river showing a silver streak here and there, and of the red, comfortable town, with the tall, central tower of its church, and of the cattle feeding placidly in the meadows. Then the border of the forest is crossed by two pleasant houses, enjoying all the amenities of civilisation. The place is called Picket Post. For why, no man can tell us, except that perhaps there might have been a post there once, of which the remains are not to be traced, where horses, or, anyhow, ponies, were tied up. But once "past the post," and the wilderness begins in earnest. The road winds along, now disappearing, and now showing us a white patch upon some distant hill; and everywhere else, as far as the eye can reach, is a wild, dreary waste. Here may be heather, and there may be gorse, and

dead and withered bracken is thickly strewn between; but there is hardly a bush big enough to shelter a fox-terrier. The brown, shaggy heath rises against the sky, quite unsoftened by the patches of sunshine which at times flit across it. Nor is there any sign of human habitation, nor any human being in sight. Yes, there is one—an old man driving a red and white cow with a tiny calf—an incident that only adds to the weirdness of the situation; for, hidden for a time by a dip of the road, when the brow of the hill is reached, both cow and calf and old man have disappeared. There is nothing in the world to conceal them within the range of vision, and the only rational conclusion to be arrived at is that they have sunk into the ground, and are pursuing their course in fairy-land.

Yet there are signs of life in this lonely land. Squads of half-wild ponies—the heath-croppers of the forest—wander about under the guidance of the most knowing of their number; and every now and then the distant tinkle of a bell sounds across the waste, and a herd of cows may be seen grazing as they move along in an irregular line, with the captain cow, distinguished by her bell, on one flank or other of her company. And now stunted trees appear, prickly holly-bushes, and twisted thorn-trees, half strangled with clinging ivy, whose interlacing stems are firmly bound about the supporting bole. Beech-trees, too, are scattered about, just showing the feathery spray of coming foliage, and silvery birches shiver in the chilly breath of the lagging spring. Presently groups of forest trees replace the rough and shaggy scrub, and green glades carry the eye towards the distant recesses of Boldrewood and Mark Ash. A richer, wider valley succeeds the ups and downs of the bleak moorland, and now may we

See through the trees a little river go,
All in the mid-day gold and glimmering.

But the little river is soon left in a moorish swamp, overgrown with mossy trees and rank vegetation. Along this half-hidden stream, in the sheltered valley, there may have been pleasant clearings once, humble cottages along its banks, the village church, the substantial homestead of the Saxon franklin. But this was eight hundred years ago or more. And then the stern Conqueror laid waste all the habitable nooks of this forest region, and drove the unhappy natives from their

hearths and homes, to make room for the deer he loved so well, and to form the wide solitude of his New Forest.

Whirr! a little knot of cyclists fly past, trying to rush the opposite hill. For the road now rises steeply enough, and on either hand glimpses are obtained of a wide range of country. As we top the hill a little cluster of houses appears in front, the first human habitations met with since leaving Picket Post, which is six miles distant. And from the highest point just beyond the village, which bears the name of Stoney Cross, a grand panoramic view meets the eye. Far beyond the forest boundaries, hills rise over hills. Half England seems to be stretched below us, certainly a considerable part of Wilts and Somerset, and over a sea of dark forest and rich campaign, appears the silvery gleam of Southampton Water, and a grey streak denotes the sea on the far horizon.

Not far to seek is Rufus Stone, which lies right over the brow of the heath, in a little hollow, surrounded by copes and young forest growths. The ancient oak that is said to have turned the arrow to the Red King's heart has long ago disappeared, and its successors have not yet attained any great size. And the stone which marked the site is now lost to sight, enclosed in an iron case, which bears an inscription, setting forth the legendary account of the King's death.

Turning towards Lyndhurst, the path quickly descends, by a succession of sweet forest glades, to the sequestered village of Minstead, which is quite the metropolis of the region round about it, with its shops, and an inn, with the sign of the "Trusty Servant," the figure of a man with the head of an elephant, and padlocked about the jaws, copied from a curious old drawing in Winchester School.

It is a rich and pleasant valley through which we pass on the way to Lyndhurst, with the enclosed grounds of the old Manor, and hanging woods, and fine plantations, appearing on either hand; and Lyndhurst is reached just in time to catch the omnibus for Lyndhurst Road Station.

And if any one had only time for a hasty glance at the New Forest, he or she would gain a very good idea of its character from the drive between the town and the station—its lawns, its vistas, and wild heaths, and the subtle charm of its exceeding peace and tranquillity.

TENT-DWELLERS.

It is pleasant and refreshing, amid the multitude of books containing "travellers' tales," to come across one which has no pretence of setting forth great adventures or discovering new lands, one which can give rise to no controversy, and one which is most eminently what it pretends to be—a simple account of three simple tours. Such a book is Mr. Hill's "Among the Bedouins,*" and the three tours were undertaken by Mr. Hill and his wife in Syria in the years 1888, 1889, 1890. The book, as Mr. Hill says, will not serve as a guide-book; but yet it gives one a very good idea of the difficulties of travel in Syria, and of the ways of overcoming them. The places described are well-known to travellers, though rarely visited, and the events recorded are of no public interest; but the book contains a plain story of pleasant journeyings, and of the troubles and trials attendant on them. A good map makes it easy to follow Mr. Hill's wanderings.

The first tour was to the east of Jordan, the start being made from Jerusalem. Immediately we open the first chapter we become acquainted with the fact, of which, perhaps, we were previously unaware, that the inhabitants of Syria are Arabs broken up into a great number of independent or rather semi-independent tribes, for most of them give some obedience to the Turkish Government, and scattered about in the villages are to be found Turkish Governors. Thus the first thing done towards starting was to send for a Sheik of the Adwan tribe, through whose territory the journey lay, to arrange for a visit to their tribe, and for safe conduct through their territory.

An important man in making these arrangements, and all through the journeys, was one George Mabbedy, an Egyptian Copt, who attended Mr. Hill on all his Syrian wanderings. He is described as "short, strongly-built, with a broad forehead, a very dark, rather fierce-looking face, and in general appearance he bears a considerable resemblance to the great Italian tragedian, Salvini. He is a splendid horseman, of great muscular strength, very brave, absolutely honest, faithful, indeed devoted to us, and as careful of us, as watchful over us, as if we were his

parents or his children." Altogether a most useful sort of servant.

When the messenger returned with two Sheiks, arrangements were come to after much discussion. For the sum of sixteen napoleons and a backsheeb, sixteen days were to be spent in the Adwan camp. So, all being arranged, a start was made to Jericho, where the party found a number of soldiers engaged in evicting certain undesirable tenants, in the way of robbers, from the numerous caves in the sides of the steep hills and cliffs. In the night, when camping in Jericho, the pleasures of tent life were charmingly exemplified by the collapse of the tent in a storm of wind and rain. However, the travellers do not seem to have minded much. Mr. Hill tried to bathe in the Dead Sea, but it was too rough; he did bathe in Jordan, and, swimming down stream, ran against a stake which, as he says, had it struck him on the left side instead of the right, would have in all probability killed him.

Having crossed Jordan, past the ruins of ancient Syria, the camp of the Adwan was soon reached. The Adwan can bring eight hundred horsemen into the field, and "are much respected for their fighting and cattle-lifting powers." The travellers were bidden to a feast where all the guests were seated strictly in their order of precedence. Lemonade and coffee started the meal, and "presently a great bowl was brought in containing a whole sheep stuffed with rice and pistachio nuts, excellently cooked, and laid upon Arab loaves of bread made in the form of pancakes. A few spoons were stuck into it for our use, and we were invited to be the first to put our hands in the dish. With some anxiety we did so, but found it very good—a most savoury mess." When it came to the turn of the Bedouins, "they sat edgeways close to each other, the face of each towards the back of his neighbour, and each held his right arm stretched towards the dish. The most important are first, and were followed by others according to their degrees, and in a very short time the great mass of food had disappeared." The Adwan men are fine, tall, and handsome, the women handsome but tattooed, the children pretty but dirty.

From the Adwan camp the travellers' way led past Pisgah (Mount Nebo) to Madaba, from whence a visit was to be made to Mashita, where are the ruins of a palace supposed to be a Persian palace of the seventh century, A.D. The Adwan

* "With the Bedouins: a Narrative of Journeys and Adventures in Unfrequented Parts of Syria." By Gray Hill. T. Fisher Unwin.

guides did not like the ride to Mashita, as it led through the territory of another tribe, the Beni Sokr; but they were persuaded to proceed; and at last advanced as if in the face of an enemy. Every hill had to be reconnoitred, and then used as a cordon of vantage from which to survey the surrounding country. However, no enemies appeared, and the party reached Mashita in safety, and finally proceeded to Rabbath Ammon. Here they had a taste of the marauding capacity of one of the Adwans, Abou Seyne by name. Seeing a horse without an owner, he quietly untethered it and mounted it himself; and on the owner coming up, simply handed the horse back to him. As Mr. Hill afterwards found out Abou, went back in the night and stole the animal outright.

At Ammon the Bedouin guides were given a sheep, and cooked it as follows: "They dug a hole in the ground, covered it over with large stones, and made a wood fire inside. When it ceased to burn in a flame, they laid the meat on the embers, and covered up with mud the entrance, and all the holes through which smoke issued, and left the meat in the oven to roast for about two hours. The oven was then opened, and the meat was picked out with the fingers, and washed in a dish containing salt water, and then placed in a large bowl, from which it was eaten."

From Ammon they journeyed to Es Salt, which place has a Turkish Governor, and which Abou Seyne would not enter, as he was wanted by the Governor for some misdoings. From Es Salt they journeyed on over a country strewn with scarlet anemones to 'Ain Roman, and from there to the ruins of Jerash, which Mr. Hill describes as follows:

"The street of columns must have been a splendid and a delightful place in the day of Jerash's glory. Many pillars still stand, although the majority have fallen; but the latter have simply been taken down by an earthquake, and have only separated into the sections or drums of which they were originally composed; and the entablature which crowned them all still lies beside them. With small exceptions, the whole is simply disjointed by the fall."

Here the Adwans left our travellers, and a fresh contract was made with the Sheik of Sâf to accompany the party as far as Tiberias for five pounds sterling.

From Jerash the way led, through country which reminded Mr. Hill of the

New Forest, to Ajlûn, where was another Turkish Governor, who had a little simple way of quieting his district. At first the people had been troublesome, but he sent one hundred and fifty to prison at Damascus, where one hundred and twenty had the misfortune to die. Strange to say, this gentle treatment had the desired effect, and the people are no longer troublesome.

Soon after this, at Umkeis, the traveller met with their only danger on this tour, which took the shape of a night attack from the people of Umkeis; but the robbers were easily repelled, and Umkeis was left as soon as possible, and the party pushed on for Tiberias, from whence they went to various places around the Sea of Galilee, to Nazareth and Mount Carmel. When they had got to Tiberias, they had reached comparative civilization, and travelling was much simpler, till they finally reached the coast at Caesarea, the ride from which place to Jaffa being considered unsafe, and a guard of soldiers, or Bedouins, being considered necessary. But Mr. Hill did not agree with this view, and came to no harm, the only two parties his people came in sight of being more afraid of him than he of them. And so they safely reached Jaffa, where they found a report believed that they had been murdered at Kerak. And at Jaffa their first tour came to an end, having furnished no great excitements, but having furnished a pleasant little trip.

The second tour was started from Jaffa, the route being at first southwards through Philistia, and then northwards as far as Palmyra, George still being one of the party. The first stopping places were Ashdod and Askalon, when the ruins were explored by moonlight, which brought out George's peculiar ideas of the stars and sun, which he thought were only little things like candles, and that people had been persuaded otherwise by interested persons who wanted to sell their telescopes. On reaching Gaza, permission was asked for two soldiers to accompany the party. Unfortunately, the soldiers were employed on the unmilitary task of collecting taxes. So, having two Bedouins with him, Mr. Hill determined to start without the soldiers. But one eventually caught up the party, the second apparently being too busy to attend to such matters. Through Beersheba, the track led to Gath, and on to Hebron—first through fields covered with barley, past hills dotted with tame

riaks, till the travellers reached a narrow gorge, which led to the hills on which Hebron stands.

At the next camping ground was a large Bedouin encampment, where they were welcomed by a Sheik, who gave them a sheep. To amuse the Bedouins, they lighted some magnesium wires. But the entertainment must have failed in its object, for the Bedouins simply remarked that they supposed they were being shown something which had fallen from the stars. From here the travellers were accompanied some way by the Sheik, and soon reached Jerusalem.

From Jerusalem the object was Damascus, which was reached without much difficulty. But one incident is worth recording, as throwing light on the ways of the country. At one of the villages, a villager was engaged to bring water. He ran away with a metal dish, and denied the theft. The next morning Mr. Hill found that the soldiers with him had chained the man's feet together, and were beginning to beat him to make him confess where the dish was. Being released by Mr. Hill, he persisted in asserting that he was innocent. The Sheik of the village offered to pay for the dish, but this was refused, and the matter seemed ended. But the next day after the start the cook wanted the dish, went to the village, found the man's house, searched it, and found the dish. Then the soldiers, being unable to find the thief, wanted to punish his brother, but this was prevented.

Having reached Damascus, preparations had to be made for the journey to Palmyra, which Mr. Hill says he would not have undertaken had he known the obstacles to be surmounted and the discomforts to be endured.

The Government of Damascus refused any escort, so George discovered a Bedouin Sheik, Nasr by name, to escort the party. He was not to start from Damascus, as, had the authorities guessed that Palmyra was the object, the journey would have been stopped. The party which started from Damascus consisted of Mr. Hill; his wife; George; Halseel, the cook; Tanus, the waiter; Selim, the chief muleteer; three under muleteers; and a young man-of-all-work, by name Nakhli. Passing through a rocky gorge, a bare, hilly country was soon reached, where the way was lost, and finally refuge had to be taken in a village, where, instead of tents, the party had to occupy a room, twenty feet

square, with ceiling formed of trunks of trees daubed with mud, and with walls fresh daubed with a kind of cement, which was not quite dry. Next day Sheik Nasr found them, and the party proceeded.

Five days from Damascus they reached Karyatén, between which place and Palmyra lie fifty miles of waterless desert. Here the discovery was made that by not coming by the shortest way, a party of soldiers had luckily been missed—luckily, for they, in all probability, would have stopped further progress. The Governor of Karyatén insisted upon Mr. Hill taking four soldiers as escort; but with characteristic Turkish unpunctuality, at the time of starting the soldiers did not turn up, though two eventually caught up the party. They rode on through the night into the next day, through a sirocco haze, surrounded by mirage. "We had a mirage always in front of us of a lake of clear water, the shores of which we could never reach. Once we saw three islands on it, and the imposing buildings of a phantom city on the middle one. These islands, buildings, and city disappeared, and there was nothing left but the strange atmosphere, the sea air, which surrounded us." After a night's halt in the desert, they reached the ruins of Palmyra, and found their tents pitched to their surprise—having read that no fresh water was to be found there—close to a stream of clear water. The ruins of Palmyra are of great extent, and presumably much more is still hidden beneath the sand. The Governor sent for their passports, and found fault with them for not being properly countersigned at Damascus; but George made it all right with him, thus saving Mr. Hill from the fate of a French lady, whom the Governor had sent back for the same reason. She had journeyed with only a dragoon from Damascus, reached Palmyra at eight in the evening, and was sent off back at three the next morning. Mr. Hill believes that she was the only traveller besides his party who succeeded in reaching Palmyra in 1869.

The stay at Palmyra lasted three days, till the heat drove the party away. They had intended remaining a week, but could bear it no longer, and started to travel all the first day in a wind "bearing great quantities of sand, and burning like the blast of a furnace." At their first stopping-place they received a further escort of two men, for the first day's journey from there was through dangerous country; but it was

not till the day after that they were at all threatened, and then the leader of the threatening party turned out to be a friend of Sheik Naar, so no harm resulted. Then the travellers came again to a country dotted with villages, with peaceable inhabitants; and, this being quickly traversed, soon arrived once more at Jaffa.

The third and last tour of the book was originally destined to reach as far south as Petra; but ended in wanderings, troublesome and tiresome to the travellers, south and east of the Dead Sea. When Mr. Hill, in 1890, reached Jerusalem, he was strongly advised not to try to reach Petra, on account of the difficulties involved; but he was quite determined to make the attempt. So a formal contract was made with Sheik Selim Abou Dahook, of the Jehalîn tribe, that he should conduct the party to Petra, with a sufficient escort, for the sum of twenty-five napoleons. The escort consisted of fifteen men—three being armed with Remington rifles, and the remainder with flint-lock guns. In addition to his usual company, Mr. Hill had with him a "Holy Man," a kind of Dervish, who had been dispatched to fetch the Sheik to make the contract. Mr. Hill took with him seventy napoleons, thinking that that would be sufficient to last to Petra and back to Jerusalem; but he had most certainly reckoned without his Bedouins. He was also furnished with a letter of recommendation to Aran, Sheik of Petra, and the Turkish Governor of Hebron, who, on receiving it, informed Sheik Selim that if he did not bring a letter expressing Mr. Hill's satisfaction in him, he would put him in prison on the first opportunity.

On the sixth day after leaving Jerusalem the party reached El Eskrib, a place within two days of Petra, and then they received a message from Aran to say that he and his followers were at war with the Howeytâl, and that he could not be responsible for their safety. It was impossible, therefore, to proceed to Petra, and George tried to persuade Mr. Hill to return to Jerusalem; but he determined to proceed to Kerâk, which is on the east side of the Dead Sea. Soon after they were encamped, a number of the Howeytâl appeared, most of them armed with Remingtons, and sat down opposite the camp. A watch was kept all night, but the Howeytâl apparently came to the conclusion that they were not strong enough to attack, and, when the cavalcade moved on, they did not attempt to follow.

Next, our party entered the territory of

the Ghawârineh tribe, who, when Mr. Hill's tents were pitched, demanded one hundred medjidies (about sixteen pounds), and said he should not go until he had paid them. Then the Jehalîn men said they would not go beyond Mineirah, so a messenger was sent to Kerâk for an escort to take the place of the Jehalîn when they should leave. Mr. Hill at last started without giving in to the demands of the Ghawârineh, who eventually acted as guides to Mineirah, and received a Turkish pound in payment. Here a letter was received from Mr. Lethaby, a missionary at Kerâk, announcing that he had arranged for an escort in the absence of Sheik Saleh, which escort consisted of nine men, who were apparently most polite, and here the Jehalîn turned back.

From Mineirah the way lay over rough and stony ground, but with lovely views over the Dead Sea. At El Draa they stopped for the night, when Sheik Saleh and one of his sons appeared, and informed Mr. Hill that, saving Mr. Lethaby and his wife and a young lady who had just joined them, no European had visited Kerâk for fourteen years. Here, at El Draa, their troubles recommenced, Sheik Saleh demanding one hundred pounds to be paid then and there. This demand was afterwards reduced to sixty napoleons, for which sum the party was to be conducted to Kerâk, through the country of the Kerâki, to within one day's journey of Madeba; thirty napoleons to be paid down immediately, and the remainder at Kerâk, and not at the northern limit of his territory. So a start was eventually made, and Kerâk reached, when they were welcomed by Mr. Lethaby, who lives there, on sufferance as it were, among the Bedouins; doing what good he can; in great poverty; and, one may almost say, in daily danger of his life. Sheik Saleh, indeed, told Mr. Hill that he intended to kill Mr. Lethaby some day.

Mr. Hill's tents were pitched at the edge of the town, and on the summit of the hill. Then money worries began again. Sheik Saleh wanted to be paid when his followers were absent; but finally that was arranged, and then the money question was apparently finally settled. But then came a message from another Sheik, Sheik Khalîl, apparently of equal power with Saleh, saying that the party must not move from Kerâk till he arrived; and, the next morning his two sons, Ibrahim and Derweeah, arrived. Saleh said he did not care for Khalîl, and would make a

start. And so he did, kindly leading the party to where Khalil was awaiting them, who conducted them forthwith to his encampment, and said he would send for some men of the Hameydeh tribe, through whose territory they would next have to pass, and finally himself demanded sixty napoleons—the same as Saleh. Khalil refused to be bound by what Saleh had said; and Saleh said he had nothing to give to Khalil, as he had given all the money to his followers. Meanwhile, Khalil insisted on having his money, while Mr. Hill had none to give him, and could get none, except by sending to Jerusalem for it. The Keraki, failing in persuasion, threatened to starve the party into payment. Finally, the "holy man" was sent to try and raise it from the Sheik of Madeba, a friend of George's, and falling Madeba, was to go on to Jerusalem. When he was gone, the annoyances and insults went on, till Mrs. Hill's woman's wit hit on a plan of quieting the Keraki; so she made them a speech, appealing to the Bedouin laws of hospitality, which was completely successful, and they were left in peace. On the fifth day the "holy man" returned, bringing the money from Jerusalem, and the party was at last enabled to proceed, and be delivered over in turn to the Hameydeh. But the Hameydeh possessed no rifles, and only one flint-lock gun, so their demands were not so likely to be successful. Nevertheless, they demanded as much as each Keraki Sheik got, and threatened; but this time Mr. Hill would not be stopped, and pressed on through the narrow pass in which they were, and finally reached Madeba without molestation, and then the Hameydeh Sheik had the cool assurance to ask for a certificate; which he got. But it was by no means such a one as he thought it was.

From Madeba there was no more trouble, and the rest of the journey to Jerusalem was uneventful enough, which must have been satisfactory after the previous experiences. This third journey was certainly the most exciting of the three; but the one which must have been the pleasantest was the first, which, to lovers of the open air and a free, roving life, must have been truly delightful, and quite worth the minor difficulties which must accompany such journeyings.

Mr. Hill ends up his pleasant book with various stories, taken down as he heard

them, in the very words, as far as he could remember them, of the narrator. Of these the following are good specimens:

"Abou Suleyman, were you ever bitten by a snake?"

"Yes, sir; once, on hand. 'Twas by Jordan. It was that time when I wait for my money to pay for wood which I bought for bridge over Jordan. I have them pieces of wood for bedstead, and slept on them, and I made fire close to me. It is always cold early in morning by Jordan. I awoke suddenly, and felt my hand cooled. I jump up. I was close by Jordan. If I jump further I fall in and never get out. I swim just like a piece of lead. I jump up and see snakes. I make shake with my hand so hard, and snake fall in fire. I cry out with very large voice. Then I ride off to Jerusalem as quick as I can. I had large donkey—very fine donkey—belong to Governor of Jerusalem. I get there in six hours. I could not move my hand."

"Did you go to a doctor?"

"No, sir; they are all stupid. I go to old Bedouin woman. She put some bran in hot water—very hot. I put my arm in. I could not feel nothing. She rub my arm—so. Then I get better. But my hand was swallowed (swollen) for two times right size when I get to Jerusalem. That Governor give me one dollar each day for three days because it was his fault I wait by Jordan."

"Ate Jutu people all thieves. Uncle of Michael is muleteer, and he was with other men in Khan, and they had animals with them. All were sleeping, and those thieves could not get in at door, so they went to top, and got down, and began to pull donkey up. And Michael's uncle woke up and saw that donkey going up, and he cried: 'See my donkey going to heaven! Wake up, wake up!' And those thieves hear him cry, and they laugh so much that they could not pull up donkey, and they let him fall. Whenever Michael's uncle tell this story every one laugh."

"Once our master go to cemetery alone, and he see one there like King sitting on throne, with long stick in hand. He think it is spirit of King Solomon or King David. And others have seen the same."

"There was old Bedouin Sheik. He

was dying. He was groaning for death, his soul just going out of him. He told his friends this: 'Never light fire at night. Never sit under crooked building. If you go before our Governor put old man first what can speak well.' Then he die. Finish."

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "Louis Draycott," "Geoffrey Striving," "Aunt Hepsy's Foundling," etc.

CHAPTER V. MR. JONES IS PERPLEXED.

BECAUSE a man starts in life with small beginnings, and, by industry and shrewdness combined, makes those small beginnings into great endings; because he develops into one who bridges over the oceans that separate the worlds by his flotillas of trading ships, and so garners up great store of wealth, tolling early and late to achieve the success upon which his mind is set; because these things are so, there is no reason why passion and poetry, sentiment and a love of the beautiful should not lie latent beneath the absorbed and resolute business exterior.

Just as "the music of the moon sleeps in the blue eggs of the nightingale," so the music that shall one day thrill his life through and through may sleep in the heart of the man who toils amid the stir and the strife of commercial life, with scant time to give to thoughts of the softer side of existence. All that is wanted may be the touch of the hand which has power to wake the echoes hitherto bound in silence.

Hitherto Amphlett Jones had seen only the commonplace side of life; the side of which ledgers full of endless columns of figures formed an important part, and in which you valued a man according as he was of the stuff that made a good clerk, or a trustworthy manager.

Now he was being initiated into endless beautiful possibilities; he was living among surroundings which would have made the sparse hair of the respectable Dodson to stand on end, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine," and his eyes—which looked as if they had pored over invoices and made entries in ledgers until they had grown bleared and dim—open to their widest extent.

It will be understood that the shrewdness that had made Mr. Jones what is called a "self-made man"—that is, a man raised to importance and position by his own earnest and honest endeavours—did not desert him in these said new surroundings. His capabilities of keen observation, his quick intuitions stood him in good stead; and it was really wonderful the change that came over the man in the course of but a few weeks. Mr. Jones had never had what the Australians so graphically call a "shew" before. Having it, he made a good use of it.

He might have dined at the 193rd man, or any other mess, any night in the week nowadays, and there would have been small chance of him showing a lurking inclination to shake hands with the bandmaster. Even his modes of speech were rapidly becoming modified, and that painful earnestness of "get up," which many times and oft marks the outsider, began to modify. The Honourable Bob, indeed, said he was like a picture that has mellowed and toned down with age; when you met him he was no longer a blow in the eye—a blotch of too, too vivid colour in the landscape. He had taken to a nice, soft, shady hat, and loose, but well-cut garments; and his chains and ornaments were less florid. The Honourable Bob regretted that Mr. Jones was so pink at the back of the neck above his collar, and that his hands were so plump and freckled; but in other respects he looked upon him as delightful, constituted himself his "guide, philosopher, and friend," and, as the others tamely put it, "ran him" generally.

"What a genial, childlike creature is the Major," said Mr. Jones to this kindly and assiduous companion.

"Just so," said the Honourable Bob, screwing his glass into his eye tighter than ever; "quite—quite. Childlike, did you say? Oh, yes, childlike and bland, don't you know?"

"Yes," said Mr. Jones, implicitly truthful, and unconscious of quotation; "really like a boy. I enjoyed myself very much the other evening. Oh, yes, I did, in a quiet kind of way; but still, very pleasant."

"Dinner of herbs, and all that kind of thing," said the Honourable Bob. "Miss Mabel, charming of course?"

"She is always that, is she not?" put in Mr. Jones, interrupting.

"Always—and then? A little quiet game of écarté with the Major?"

"No—we sat out in the court and smoked, while Miss Mabel and Mr. Clutterbuck sang. It was delightful."

The Honourable Bob turned and gazed in a puzzled and searching manner at the speaker, uttering a long-drawn-out and deep "by Jove!"

The face of Mr. Jones wore the simple and confiding expression of a child.

"No deception there," thought Mr. Dace; "but then, where is the deception? or, to put it mildly, what game is Clutterbuck up to now?"

Naturally, he could not put the question aloud; but inwardly he was in no small amaze.

Still, what Mr. Jones had said explained a good many things: notably the smiling satisfaction of the Major's wife and daughter in this friendship with the ship-owner of Seething Lane.

"Do you know," said Mr. Jones, breaking in upon the other's line of meditation, "do you know that Sir Peyton has asked me to dine with him exactly fourteen times, and each time, apparently, forgotten all about it when he saw me next? He is exceedingly eccentric."

"Oh, yes. He's like that, you know, when he's a bit jumpy."

"Jumpy?" said Mr. Jones.

Then a smile spread itself over his genial face.

"I see," he said; "I understand."

"There isn't a better-hearted fellow than old Paling, alive," said the Honourable Bob, suddenly jealous for his comrade; "he has a heart of gold."

"Yes, I know. Indeed, the Major told me"—majors were as plentiful as blackberries, as the saying goes, in Malta; but, somehow, to those who knew him, Major Clutterbuck was always "the" Major—"that Sir Peyton was one who stood by his friends, even on a rainy day."

"Very much so," said the Honourable Bob, drily; "or on a wet night, when things are apt to leak a bit black sometimes, don't you know?"

Mr. Jones was not sufficiently up in military argot to understand the full significance of this last remark; but he grasped the fact that, in some way or other, Sir Peyton Paling had been substantially useful to the Major.

There was a good deal about the Clutterbuck household that puzzled Mr. Jones not a little. For instance, the buoyancy and brightness of its head, on the one hand, the careworn, chevronically-

troubled expression on Mrs. Clutterbuck's face, and the tinge of sadness that he felt rather than saw in her daughter Mabel, on the other. As to Bertie's indiscreet revelations on the night of Phil's hunt after the pigeon's nest, Mr. Jones had tried to put them out of his mind altogether, as something he had not come by quite honestly, and had no possible right to. Perhaps he had not managed to do this quite successfully; but, still, he had made a conscious effort. Now, conversing thus easily with the Honourable Bob, Mr. Jones was too innate a gentleman to ask one single question, or even go near doing so; and yet he would have given a good deal to know if Bertie's assertion that his sister Mabel "cried over Phil at nights" had any foundation in truth.

Recalling the earnest face and artless manner of the speaker, it seemed a cruel wrong to accuse him of falsehood, or even intentional exaggeration; and yet, could there be a skeleton, or divers skeletons in the family cupboard, when the husband and father went carolling through life as though sunshine and flowers were the only things worth realising or thinking about?

It made the prettiest picture in the world—the tall, gallant-looking soldier, with his children gathered about him, as he sang some old-world ditty—he was great in ballads of simple pathos and gentle joy—while his wife touched the piano with delicate finger, playing the accompaniment just as it should be played, which, by the way, is more than many women can do.

Jim, with his sturdy legs wide apart, and his impish face softened almost into beauty for the nonce, would listen to the Major singing, as he might to the utterances of a god; and Phil would clap his little hands and say "pitty, pitty moosic!" as the last note died away.

Did all this look like the shedding of silent tears in that moonlit room, wherein Mr. Jones had once found himself a strange and untimely visitor? Did it look as if Phil's pillow was like to be wet with dew that had fallen from his sister's gentle eyes? Vulgar curiosity was far, very far from the man whose lot had lain in the busy City, and among the toilers, not the triflers, of life.

He had risen betimes, and late taken rest; he had eaten the bread of carefulness, until such time as the corn, and oil, and wine increased. They had increased

in a marvellous ratio—increased until he himself scarcely knew their limits. He had earned a time of rest and change—fairly earned it, after so many years of labour.

Mabel Graham always had a kindly look and a kindly word for Mr. Jones. True as steel herself, she was quick to recognise truth in others. She knew him to be simple, good, without the assertiveness that sometimes accompanies great wealth: one of Nature's gentlemen in every sense of the expression.

She had no faintest notion of how it thrilled him through to have her white hand laid in his for the one supreme moment of meeting and greeting; how her dress, touching him as she passed, seemed as the wafting of an angel's wing; how he bore her name prayerfully in his honest heart, bidding Heaven bless her, and keep her from all sorrow and all ill.

It must be understood that all this time Mr. Amphlett Jones was what he considered "getting on nicely"; at least that was how he worded it to Dodson in the short, yet satisfactory letters indited to that deserving man from time to time.

The visit to the Palace had been duly paid under the guidance of the Major, and the name of Jones been properly inscribed in the Governor's book.

In due time came an invitation to one of the last balls of the season—for the little court was about to migrate to the lovely country palace of San Antonio—and, it must be confessed, Mr. Jones felt somewhat nervous. But the Honourable Bob cheered him not a little.

"I'll see you through, my dear fellow," he said, hovering round with his glass in his eye like an amiable vulture! "I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you," said Mr. Jones, "it will be a great comfort." But, after all, neither much comfort, nor yet much "seeing through," was needed. The shrewdness and acumen that Amphlett Jones had brought to bear upon his business life, did not fail him now. He brought the same qualities to bear upon the task of learning his world in these wonderful new surroundings amid which he found himself, and the task proved an easy one. In spite of various little peculiarities that peeped out here and there, he was voted "delightful"; and even these peculiarities were declared to be "taking." The heart of every mother who had heard the story of little Phil was his, and we know that the partisanship of

mothers must at all times prove an influence absolutely irresistible.

Like some late-blossoming flower, our City man expanded and glowed in this genial atmosphere. He had not one, but many sources of delight. First and foremost was his intercourse with the Clutterbuck family; added to this his friendship with the Honourable Bob; the kindness of the bibulous Baronet, who tooted him about in a certain high, very high, dog-cart, drawn by a high, very high-stepping mare, and much thought of by the garrison. Sir Peyton would swing round corners on one wheel, or try his hand at a little "inch-driving." Once—but this must have been a fable—he drove clear over a low male-aled, leaving the owner of the same praying in an anguish by the road-side, and invoking all the saints of the Roman calendar one after the other. Thrice had Sir Peyton been precipitated from this said dog-cart, each time giving a young nephew of his at Eton a good chance of becoming a juvenile baronet; and how the military groom who rode behind held on, was a mystery indeed. The Honourable Bob had suggested cobbler's wax as a possible solution; anyway, the man's face had a stern and resolute expression as he let go the "stepper's" head—that pampered animal instantly launching herself into space, apparently sure that her own specific gravity would bring her safely down again—which might well have become a man going into action. Mr. Jones, perched up beside the Jehu-like Major, might look grave, but never frightened, nor did he once yield to temptation in the form of clutching the rail at an awkward corner; but he was pleased to hear that ladies seldom accompanied the Major on what he was wont to call his "spins," since Mabel Graham's slender neck might otherwise have been imperilled.

A huge bull-dog, with the head of a gigantic toad, and the chest of an ox, was wont to sit up beside the stern-faced groom. He wore a wide, nail-studded collar with all the "side" and conceit of the Honourable Bob himself, and his name was Butcher—hardly one to inspire unquestioning confidence. Butcher was, however, great friends with Mr. Jones, and patronised him after a certain sedate fashion, greeting him with a gentle movement of a stout and stumpy tail, that never wagged wildly save for the master he adored. For the bibulous one was the most tender-hearted of human beings, and

the "stepper" would shove a velvet-nose into his coat-pocket for a lump of sugar, while as to Butcher, he slept at his master's feet all night long, never hudding from the door of the field-officer's quarters until his return, no matter what awful hours this fidelity obliged him to keep. Then, with a hoarse, though joyful cry, he would spring upon the foot of the cot, that many a civilian would have turned up his nose at, as a resting-place quite beneath contempt.

"It says volumes for our f-f-friend that old B-B-Butcher don't object to him, don't you know," said Sir Peyton to the others; and they murmured their assent, for there could be no doubt at all as to Butcher's capabilities of making himself disagreeable if he chose.

"Paling always drives his best when he's a bit jumpy, give you my word," said the Honourable Bob, in a confidential moment, to Mr. Jones; and in this statement was comfort, for on more than one occasion the Baronet had been considerably exhilarated, and Butcher had been driven to balance himself on the seat behind after the manner of an acrobat performing on the tight-rope, while the groom looked more than ever like a man under fire, and Mr. Jones reflected upon the startling probability that various charitable institutions would promptly and largely benefit under his own will.

"It's a deal safer than it looks, give you my word," said the Honourable Bob. This, too, was consoling.

It certainly did not feel safe; but, then, we are told that sensation is occasionally misleading; and there was a certain satisfaction in whirling down the steep hill between Sleima and Valetta, and wondering what Dodson would say if he could see how the head of the firm was conducting—

Then there was Ginger.

Mr. Jones quite loved that callow warrior, with his stubble-like hair and yellow moustache. There was a simplicity about Ginger that attracted one. Of course, he must have had some other name; in fact, the Army List that lay on the ante-room table described him as Ernest Dalrymple St. John—a quite ridiculous name for such a boyish creature—indeed, some kindly hand had corrected an evident mistake, and written "Ginger," in rather a shaky fist, just opposite. Every one called him Ginger. Jim and Algie called him "Mr. Ginger." It may be opined that the

regimental letter-corporal was about the only person who realised him as Mr. Saint John.

Once Ginger confided to Mr. Jones the fact that he had lost somewhat heavily—to Major Clutterbuck—the night before. Mr. Jones had been dining at the mess of the Rifle Brigade, and meanwhile there had been a spell of play at the pretty house at Sleima.

"Dear me," said Mr. Jones, with grave simplicity of look and manner; "I can fancy how concerned our good friend, the Major, would be at such a run of ill-luck on your part."

"Oh—ah—yes. Just so—quite so," said Ginger, with a feeble laugh and a somewhat imbecile stare; "quite so!"

Then he stroked his brimstone-coloured moustache lovingly, put on a knowing smirk, and questioned Mr. Jones, delicately.

"By the way, you play, don't you, with the Major, now and again?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Jones, with a pleasant smile, "I have taken a hand at a quiet rubber several times. Sixpenny points, you know."

It was a good thing he took leave soon after this, for Ginger couldn't have held out much longer.

Scarcely was the good man well into the square, with its central fountain, when Ginger began to stamp about the room like mad.

"Lord!" he said spluttering, "he'll be the death of me, I know he will. 'How concerned our good friend the Major would be.' Ha, ha! that's a good 'un, that is. Don't I wish Dacre were here, that's all! Stop till I tell them in the ante-room, to-night; they'll die of it. I know they will. It'll be the death of Paling." Here he took to stamping about again; but suddenly drew himself up stiff and straight, struck by an immense idea. "I have it," he cried. "It's the kid, that's what it is. He looks upon the man, Jones, as sacred in a way, because of the kid. Good old Clutterbuck!"

Ginger was quite touched by this tender consideration on the part of the Major; much more touched than he would have been by such a trait in another person.

That is the use of being rather a bad person: if you do anything good people think so much of it. They think ever so much more of it than they would if some highly estimable individual had added a scintillation to his usual steady shining.

The surrounding darkness brings out the light so clearly—perhaps that is it.

Well, any way, Amphlett Jones was getting on with all these people mighty well; and if the days did get hotter, and the nights, too, for matter of that, why, as he observed to the Honourable Bob, "you had every possible appliance at hand. It wasn't like living through a stifling spell of summer weather in England, with small houses and thin walls, and ceilings that, compared to the grand old Maltese palaces, might be said to touch your head, not it!"

And the Honourable Bob said that, for his part, he believed he must have been originally evolved from a salamander, so dearly did he love being broiled, and stewed, and frizzled, and all the rest of it.

Nevertheless, the Honourable Bob winked in a furtive manner at Ginger; and Ginger put his tongue in his cheek by way of return signal, while both relieved their feelings by the broadest of grins behind the back of the ship-owner, who was looking out of window and admiring the style and cut of Sir Peyton's "cart" in the street below, with the stern-faced groom restraining the high-stepper with difficulty; and Butcher, with blunt nose, mightily uplifted, watched the passers-by with an infinite scorn from the altitude of the front seat.

What these derisive gestures on the part of Mr. Dacre and Mr. Saint John might mean, deponent sayeth not; and they neither puzzled nor troubled Mr. Jones, since he did not see them.

About this time a cloud came across—not the azure, cloudless sky of the heavens above, but the mental firmament of Amphlett Jones.

It happened on this wise:

"Old Masters" called upon him. That worthy man's fierce moustache and the bright-blue kindly eyes that looked at you so pleasantly; his frank, hearty manner—all pleased Mr. Jones. The two men—both so simple and excellent in their several ways—got on amazingly. So far so good; but the call had to be returned, and, the doctor being out, it devolved upon Mrs. Masters to do the honours. Now be it said that the Honourable Bob was on guard-duty that day, and Ginger only to the fore. The Honourable Bob could manage Mrs. Masters better than any man in the regiment, not excepting the C. O. She was afraid of him for some reason or other, and less repentant when he was present. But for Ginger she cared not a

straw. He had no power of saying things that seemed only lazily polite, and yet stung.

Ten minutes after the two men entered the shady drawing-room, and discovered Mrs. Masters dosing over a book. Amphlett Jones felt that the gilt was being peeled off his ginger-bread, the "high top-gallant of his joy" being run away.

Mrs. Masters had that unenviable power called "taking the gloss off everything."

Let us listen to her awhile.

"Oh, yes, it is true that people always seem glad to see Mrs. Clutterbuck, shabby as she is. One night, at the Palace, the Governor walked about with her for quite a long time. I'm sure I don't know what he can have thought of her black gown being so brown at the seams. I assure you it looked the colour of coffee-ground in certain lights."

"But do you mean to say that Sir Marchmont Oglevie—that his Excellency—remarked upon the—the"—have Mr. Jones cast about for a less offensive word than shabbiness—"worn appearance of the dear lady's apparel?"

"Old Bogies wouldn't do a caddish thing like that; he isn't built that way," put in Ginger, not without some heat.

"Oh, dear no," said Mrs. Masters, suavely, twisting her little fat hands the one in the other, and looking as though she were shocked at the suggestion; "but one can judge by a person's looks as to what he thinks, can't one? But, indeed, the Clutterbucks are always eccentric. Look at that affair about the child. I'm sure that looked like a put up thing."

"He wasn't put up, he got up," said Ginger, sotto voce.

"Such a fuss as people made; such a talk! As I said to Dr. Masters, I should have been quite ashamed of making myself so conspicuous."

There was a most wicked gleam in Ginger's eyes, and he puckered up his mouth as if for a long whistle; but of words spake he none.

As for Mr. Jones, he was perfectly bewildered. Everything seemed to be being turned upside down. He had never felt so uncomfortable since he left Dodson.

"I think every one likes the Clutterbucks," he said, hastily, all at once becoming conscious that the day was remarkably warm.

"Of course they do," replied Mrs. M.

cheerfully. "All the men are in love with Miss Graham; and all the women go to see what the other men can see in her."

"I should think no one stands in need of spectacles to see that," retorted Mr. Jones, more than ever convinced that this was the hottest day they had yet had; "no one."

"I quite agree with you," said the doctor's wife, in her most maddening manner. "Of course, in a place where there are hardly any girls at all, any girl is sure to be made much of. Perhaps if he were in England, even Sir Peyton Paling would not be quite so devoted."

Here was a side-light with a vengeance! Mr. Jones had never thought of the bibulous one in the light of an aspirant to Miss Graham's hand.

"Some would hesitate to encourage a man like Major Paling," began Mrs. Musters.

But Ginger was on the defensive in a trice.

"Paling's a good old sort, Mrs. Musters; as good an old sort as you'll see in a day's march."

"Indeed he is," chimed in Mr. Jones, generous and true, in spite of the qualm of a moment ago.

"At all events," persisted the lady, "Major Chatterback would willingly take him for a son-in-law, as any one with half an eye can see. I wish there were more girls in Malta; then those who are here wouldn't get their heads turned. Besides, it's because there aren't any girls that the married women flirt so."

"Do they—flirt?" said Mr. Jones, simply. "Well, I suppose they do. They are, many of them, so young; and the freshness of it all, the glitter and the sparkle, the being made so much of—yes, I can understand it."

Then, with a grave simplicity that sent Ginger flying to the window:

"Do you flirt, Mrs. Musters?"

"I! No, thank you," with a shiver of repulsion. "I hope I know myself better. I have always set my face against that sort of thing—always."

"Ah, I see," said Mr. Jones; "the others are young, they have not had time to think of things seriously, they are paid so much attention to; they mean no harm, but take the pleasant hours as they come. A veteran like you has different ideas."

It might well be supposed from the sounds he made, that Lieutenant Saint John was trying to swallow his forage

cap; certainly, when at last he turned round, his eyes were suffused and watery, as after some supreme effort.

Perhaps it was just as well, that, at this juncture, Dr. Masters—genial, kindly, unsuspecting of social storms—arrived in their midst.

That evening, as the blinding glow of the day was fading rapidly—as it does in that climate—Mr. Jones betook himself to the house at Sleima.

He had a strange feeling as if he ought to make some amends to his good friends there, for having listened to that uncomfortable woman, the doctor's wife, cheapen them. He almost felt as though he himself had been guilty of a disloyalty; of something that had to be wiped out by renewed homage and tender service.

The familiar door stood half open; and through it he had a glimpse of the children in the room beyond the hall. They were all clustered round the central figure—Phil.

But such a Phil!

Such a disconsolate, dragged-looking, uncrowned King Baby!

In a moment Mr. Jones was in their midst, his wide-brimmed pith hat laid on a chair, his grizzled head bent over the disconsolate child.

"Phil—Phil," he said, "my boy—what is it?"

"I be's a welly sad 'and solly Phil, this day," said the child, pitifully; "I wishes if evellything could for to not be so mashy—daddy's sick—an' my nother docky does be come—an' muddle's c'ying ever so—and Mabel— Oh, I can't see Mabel anywheres at all—"

"Things have gone wrong," said Jim, with his legs wide apart, and his hands in his pockets; "they do, you know, sometimes."

"'Tings 'ave gone wrong," lisped Algie, as usual an excellent echo, and looking up at his brother to see if any more observations were to be made.

"Don't mind Phil," continued Jim, with an effect after jauntiness that had something peculiarly touching in it to Mr. Jones; "he's such a frightened child—he can't stand things like we can, you know," and to show how well he could stand things, Jim sobbed a little sob.

"But what is it all about?" said Mr. Jones, lost in wonder.

"Papa is ill—he has one of his bad turns," said Lily, trying to speak as she

had heard Mabel do, on similar occasions; "Dr. Musters is with him, and mamma, and Mabel—no, Mabel is in her own room writing letters."

"And crying over them—I saw her," put in Jim.

"I be's cy'in, too—and nobody be's solly," said King Baby in a lamentable, small voice.

Then they all spoke at once, like the choruses in an opera. They all swayed towards him and held what each could get of him.

"We are all very sorry," they said, "we cannot bear to have you sad."

The monarch was, by this, something appeased. He sat in Lily's lap, leaning his golden head against her shoulder. The others—including Mr. Jones—stood round and looked at him.

"Is your father ill! Could I not see him!" said Mr. Jones, at length, to Jim.

And Lily, with quite the air of a grown-up girl, took upon herself to reply:

"Mabel will tell you. I think she will come down and see you. Bertie has gone upstairs to tell her you are here."

Then a wonderful thing happened.

Mabel came; he knew well enough it was Mabel; but she was so changed that the sight of her stabbed his heart like a knife.

Her great brown eyes were strained and dim, and looked as if their light had been put out by tears; her lips were set and pale; her brow, from which the hair

was all pushed back, looked as white as marble; but on the temples the sweat had beaded, and glistened in the faint amber light that came in through the open window.

She came straight up to him, and laid her hand upon his arm. The night was hot and airless, yet the chill of that hand struck through the sleeve of his light coat.

"You have come to ask how my father is," she said; but, oh! in what a strange and altered voice. "He is better; but the doctor will not leave him to-night. It is his head; he is often so; we think it must be the sun."

"I heard mother say it was bother and worry, you know, about——" began Jim, sturdily.

"Hush, Jim," said Mabel, sharply, "do not speak; your voice is shrill; he will hear; it will disturb him."

She sank upon a chair, wearily, and as though her limbs would bear her up no longer.

She beckoned Mr. Jones to her side, the children looking on wide-eyed.

"There is something I want to say to you," she said, panting a little as she spoke. "People are wondering why you go on staying here. I am wondering. Do you not know that the heat is growing day by day; that all visitors are leaving the island? Why do you not go with the rest?" Then, with a sort of wail in her voice, she put the question to him yet again: "Why do you not go?"

NOTE.

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BY MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

"AND it wasn't a month since she met him in the wood," finished Sylvia, impressively.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning, two days later, and she and Mervyn Dallas were alone together in the Cornishes' morning-room where Mervyn had spent the last half hour perched upon the table, in her hat and jacket, sticking pins recklessly into the table-cover in her excitement, and listening with breathless interest while Sylvia told her the story of "the engagement." There was to be a solemn consultation in the course of the morning on the subject of bridesmaids' dresses, and Mervyn, in her eager enthusiasm, had rushed in like a small, brown hurricane at about ten o'clock, to be a good deal laughed at, ordered about, and made useful until she retired with Sylvia into the morning-room to devour her impatience, and talk about Selma, who was reported to be "busy with Roger."

She drew a long breath as Sylvia ceased, and stuck a pin so wildly into the table-cover that it ran into the little, ungloved finger as well, and she carried the latter with a quaint, self-pitying gesture, to her lips as she said, with intense conviction:

"How thrilling, Sylvia."

"It was exciting," agreed Sylvia, taking up the needle-work which had fallen unnoticed on her knee as her story approached its crisis. "Of course we should

have been sorry if Roger had got engaged to a strange girl so very soon after he came home; but it's lovely to have it all going on in the house, and Selma is such a dear!"

The familiar fondness of the tone in which Sylvia spoke of her cousin did not strike Mervyn as odd, new as it was. She was too warm-hearted and impetuous, too much given to receiving new impressions through the medium of feeling alone to see, as a colder and less keenly interested observer would have seen, that the attitude, not only of Sylvia, but of the whole family towards Selma, was entirely altered. They had always been fond of her; but they had looked at her as it were from a distance. As a genius with a magnificent future before her, Selma had been a being none the less awe-inspiring from the vagueness of their comprehension of her. Selma, "madly in love," without an idea beyond her new fancy, was a girl like themselves, to be met on common ground. The unusual sweetness and fascination which, all unconsciously to herself, had helped to surround the old Selma with her atmosphere of superiority in their eyes, now made them, one and all, look upon her—to use Sylvia's last words—as "such a dear."

There was a moment's silence after Mervyn's enthusiastic endorsement of this sentiment, while Sylvia gave her mind to her work, and Mervyn, with a quick little turn of her head, listened to some distant sounds in the house which she hoped heralded Selma's approach. They died away, however, and she turned again to Sylvia, and said, meditatively:

"And she's given up all her work, and everything."

"Of course!" answered Sylvia. "She

would have had to give it all up, even if she'd gone on caring about it; but, luckily, she doesn't a bit, I don't believe she's thought of it again since she saw Roger!"

"And we shall never see her act after all! Of course, if Selma thinks it isn't, why it isn't"—and Selma's loyal devotee spoke from the bottom of her heart—"but if it was any one else wouldn't you say it was rather waste, Sylvia?"

The pin-sticking process was very meditative and reflective, and the quaint little figure propounded the question from a purely abstract point of view; but Sylvia was not given to abstractions, she missed the drift of the question, and answered from a personal point of view with some energy.

"I don't know what you mean, Mervyn! Of course, I don't mean that Selma isn't sweet and lovely, and everything; but I don't see how you can expect me to think that any girl would be wasted on Roger! I think she's very lucky!"

An impetuous apology and a very incoherent explanation from Mervyn ensued, and Sylvia, easily mollified, asked:

"Don't you like him, Mervyn? I'm sure you will, when you know him better!"

"I shall! Oh, I shall, Sylvia," cried the much perturbed Mervyn, "I mean I do! Only strangers are so dreadful you know. Of course, if Selma loves him so tremendously, he must be very nice. Oh, Sylvia!" she added, slipping lightly off the table, "here they are at last!"

Mrs. Cornish, Selma, and Helen came in together as she spoke, Selma looking very happy and excited. The "business with Roger," at which the whole family had jeered that morning, had been "real business" as she proudly explained, business connected with a house. Roger had gone now to see about it, and to settle the final details of his new partnership, and as Selma said, with a delightful assumption of a practical and business-like air, the effect of which was rather spoilt by a vivid blush:

"He will have a very busy day, and we must have a very busy day, too, mustn't we, auntie."

Whether the business of the day was much advanced during the next half hour is more than doubtful. The three other girls were what Helen described, with a laugh, as "much too frivolous." But there was a great deal of laughter and talk, a great deal of discussion of colours

and stuffs, a great deal of bright, young excitement; and in the midst of it the parlourmaid came in with some newly-arrived letters, two for Mrs. Cornish, and one for Selma, which she opened and read without looking at the envelope, as she protested vigorously against the idea of bridesmaids in grey.

"It's suggestive of half-mourning, and all kinds of depression," she was saying, as she ran her eyes over her letter, "I should feel as though it were a bad—" she broke off suddenly, unnoticed in the discussion which had arisen on her words, and turned to Mrs. Cornish with an exclamation of pleasure. "Oh, isn't this fortunate?" she said. "Miss Tyrrell wants me to go and see her this afternoon, and it's just the afternoon when I can go, as Roger isn't in."

Mrs. Cornish lifted her eyes from her own letters, and contemplated the bright face in silence for a moment while the three girlish voices ran on unheeding.

"Doesn't she ask Helen, too?" she asked, rather sharply.

Selma laughed, and shook her head. "Helen doesn't like Miss Tyrrell," she said; "she says—oh, they don't get on at all. But she really is very kind, auntie," she repeated, vaguely conscious of something disapproving in her aunt's face, and Mrs. Cornish answered, in something approaching the old, constrained voice, which she had not used to Selma since her engagement:

"Do as you like, my dear, of course. Perhaps, then, we had better get you some patterns to choose from this afternoon, if you don't go yourself. There is no time to be lost."

It was on this understanding, after much more discussion and much more merriment, that the conclave finally broke up for luncheon, to which meal Mervyn remained as a matter of course. She had to tear herself away directly afterwards, however, and a little later Helen and Selma were practically alone in the house.

Helen had not gone with the shopping expedition, in spite of Sylvia's persuasions. She had given a great many excellent reasons for staying at home; but she had not mentioned the true one, and nobody had guessed that she had reasons for hoping that Humphrey, who spent all day at his studio, might come home early that afternoon, and might have something to tell her when he came. Not even Selma guessed how her sister was wondering, and hoping,

and fearing, as she worked so cheerfully and industriously during the hour they passed together. It seemed to her a very short hour until the time came for her to go to Miss Tyrrell's, and she left the room to put on her hat, with a pretty, caressing, reluctant touch on Helen's cheek.

Her sister followed her with loving, admiring eyes, listened a moment, and then returned to her work with a little, half-suppressed sigh. But a moment later she lifted her head again, with a bright colour in her cheeks, as a man's step sounded on the stairs, the door opened, and Humphrey came in. She scrutinised his quiet face as he crossed the room to her, her pretty blue eyes made clear-sighted by her love, and, as he stooped to kiss her upturned face, she was encouraged by what they saw to say, breathlessly :

"Well, dear !"

He smiled at her, a sweet, grave smile, which very seldom lit up his face, and which seemed to come from the bottom of his heart.

"He's taken it, Helen."

"Oh, Humphrey." Her face had crimsoned all over with pleasure, and she slipped a soft hand, thimble and all, into his. "At your own price! Oh, what a nice man. Didn't I tell you so, my dear old dependant boy!"

"He wants to send it to the New Gallery."

"Oh, Humphrey; does he think it so beautiful?"

"He thinks it good. And he knows."

Not many nights before at a club-dinner—a function which he hated, and very seldom attended—Humphrey had chanced to drift into conversation with one of the guests of the evening, a Mr. Forsyth, a connoisseur of painting, whose word was considered as final by all lovers of art, whose love of pictures was so genuine and absorbing that he cared nothing for the fashionable reputation his critical faculty—considered in combination with his very great wealth—would have given him had he chosen to take it. He did not choose, and he had not taken it; he remained unfashionable, and Miss Tyrrell and her "set" hardly knew his name. Humphrey, having met him once or twice before, their talk had passed on from one thing to another until it happened to touch on the treatment of a certain symbolical subject by one of the Old Masters. It was a subject which lay very near Humphrey's heart; he had given many months of

thought and labour to the realisation of the conception of it, which had grown up in his own mind, and, before the two men separated, an eager question from the elder man, as to whether he might come and see the picture, had received a ready assent from the painter.

Humphrey had come now to Helen straight from the interview in his studio, which had there and then been arranged. Mr. Forsyth had bought the picture in question without a moment's hesitation, and, what was even more to the unpractical Humphrey, he had given it delicate and intelligent praise.

"Humphrey, what a nice man," said Helen, again, with a little, sympathetic squeeze of his hand. "Oh, I wish I'd been there. Do tell me what he said." And then, as Selma's voice was heard as she came singing downstairs, she added: "Here's Selma. How pleased she will be."

There was a moment's pause, and then he said, slowly :

"Tell her about the money, Helen; not what Forsyth said."

She had only time to look at him in laughing wonder at what she took to be his modesty, before the bright voice, drawing nearer, stopped at the door, and Selma came in, much surprised at seeing Humphrey, to take a hasty farewell of Helen, and to depart with all possible speed.

"Where are you going?" asked Humphrey, as he put her into the cab.

"To Miss Tyrrell's—didn't Helen tell you? Oh, tell him I'm very late." And the cab drove off as Humphrey went up the steps, with a face which was very grave and abstracted.

There was nothing grave or abstracted about Selma, however, as she stood, half an hour later on the Tyrrells' threshold. The servant who took her cloak—Miss Tyrrell always liked things done, as Helen had once said, resentfully, "as if she lived at a party"—thought she had never seen Miss Malet look younger or lovelier.

"This way, miss, please," she said, and led the way, somewhat to Selma's surprise, not up to the drawing-room, but along the passage to Tyrrell's study.

There is nothing more curious or more insidious than the mental atmosphere which pervades some houses for those who are familiar with them, without being literally at home in them. In Selma's

mind, for as long as she could remember, the Tyrrells' house had been associated with all she knew of the intellectual and the artistic. She had passed down that passage, under the pictures she knew so well—the pictures of great artists passed away—as a child and as a girl as constantly and as familiarly as she had passed to and fro in her own home, and she had never yet come from the room, towards which she was now moving, without feeling herself a little stronger, a little farther along the road she had desired so ardently to traverse. With every step she took now, amid those familiar surroundings, the atmosphere of Tyrrell's house, so utterly different from the mental atmosphere from which she had come, closed more closely round her, though she herself was entirely unaware of it.

It was a very unusual thing to find Miss Tyrrell in her brother's room; but though she was sitting there, with a "high art" tea-table near her, when Selma entered, even these extraneous objects could not destroy its familiar character in the girl's eyes, and utterly unconscious as she was of any change in herself, her manner altered imperceptibly as she went in.

"So you've come, dear girl," said Miss Tyrrell, stretching out both her hands to her as she would have done to quite two-thirds of her acquaintances under the same circumstances. Now that Selma had given up her artistic career, Miss Tyrrell took no further interest in her. She would have been much puzzled to say why she had asked her to tea that afternoon—she was entirely unaware that she had acted on a suggestion from her brother; but graceful cordiality in general, and that gesture in particular, suited her style, and she seldom varied it to any great extent. "You are a very naughty girl," she went on, "and I am very angry with you; but I am charmed to see you nevertheless."

"It's very sweet of you, Miss Tyrrell," returned Selma, laughing and blushing as she kissed her.

"Sit down, dear child, in that oak chair; you suit it so admirably."

"It is very nice to sit in it again. It is very nice to be here!" said Selma impulsively, looking round the room as she spoke.

Miss Tyrrell smiled at her indulgently, and went on in her languid manner:

"It was John's fancy to have tea in this room—quite a new idea of his, and a great compliment to you, Selma. He has just

come in from a very late rehearsal. Certainly there is a great deal of drudgery and fatigue behind our great artists' great triumphs. Perhaps one ought not to be surprised that you have thought better of it."

"Oh, Miss Tyrrell, it isn't that!"

The cry—it was a cry of pain—broke from Selma involuntarily, and a quick sense of surprise at herself followed it. Why should she care so much? she asked herself. What had made her feel suddenly so unlike herself—her present self? She was still struggling vaguely with the influences about her, which she could neither define nor understand, when the door opened and Tyrrell came in.

He shook hands with her rather gravely, she thought, and sat down with only the necessary words of greeting.

"How did the rehearsal go, John?" asked Miss Tyrrell.

He glanced at Selma and then at his sister, and said shortly, and in a tone which seemed to exclude Selma from any interest in the rehearsal, as he addressed his sister exclusively:

"As usual."

Then he turned quickly to Selma, and said with the air of a man who puts away private affairs to introduce topics of interest to others, "Is he quite well, Selma?"

But Selma did not answer the question. She hesitated a moment, and looked at him with alightly-flushed face and troubled eyes.

"Are you tired of it," she said—"the piece I mean—or is it—is it——? Oh, Mr. Tyrrell! please don't! Oh, do you think I'm quite another girl! Please tell me all about the piece. You don't know how much I care. I shall care always."

He looked at her for a moment, and, as she met his eyes, her own dropped, and she knew, though she could not have explained the reason, that she was ashamed.

"As you please, of course," he said. "I don't know, though, that there is much to tell you; much that you don't know already, I mean. It is shaping very well, and I expect we shall be ready by the thirtieth."

"That is really excellent," said Miss Tyrrell, "considering that you were in Greece longer than you expected."

Her brother did not answer. His face hardened slightly, and he rose rather abruptly to put his cup down.

"And Thyrsa!"

Thyrza was the name of the character Selma herself was to have played, and her utterance of the name—so prominent a feature in all her thoughts three months before—drew her further still into her old, almost forgotten world, and the question was followed by a strange, little sigh.

"Thyrza has developed into a more important part than we expected."

"Will Miss Hilton be good?"

"Miss Hilton will be very good."

There was another sigh, and Selma sat, lost in a dream, while a few more words passed between John Tyrrell and his sister. She roused herself suddenly to find that the former was waiting to take her empty cup; standing, watching her with an indefinable expression on his handsome face.

They talked no more of the new piece after that. John Tyrrell led the conversation to all the old, familiar topics, of which Selma had hardly thought, had certainly not spoken for the last three months. He talked of art—musical as well as dramatic; he talked of the literature of the day and of the old poets, checking Miss Tyrrell with quite imperceptible sarcasm when she wandered to fashionable art furniture or infant prodigies.

"Have you seen this?" he said, at last, taking up a book that lay on the table near him, and handing it to Selma, who took it eagerly.

It was the latest volume of a great living poet. And she answered:

"I didn't even know it was out! Oh, won't you read it to me?"

She lifted her head impulsively from the leaves she had been turning over as she spoke, and looked at him in excited appeal. Her eyes were bright, and her cheeks were flushed, but her face was utterly unlike the face that Roger Cornish knew. Every line of it expressed vivid intellectuality, keen, artistic interest; and Tyrrell took the book from her with a curious smile.

"Some of it, perhaps," he said. "It is very fine!"

He opened the book, and turned over one or two pages, and Miss Tyrrell rose, gracefully, but promptly. Fashionable poetry in the abstract was as useful a form of fashionable art as any other; but taken in the concrete, without the stimulus of an audience, she was invariably considerably bored by it—as her brother was well aware.

"I'm sure you won't mind, then, dear child, if I go and see Milne?" Milne was

her dressmaker. "I've remembered that I told her to come this afternoon"—Miss Tyrrell did not add that she had subsequently postponed the interview—"and I'm afraid she has been waiting for ages! Good-bye, if I don't see you again. It will be quite like old days to you, won't it?"

"Yes," returned Selma, absently, as she kissed her, "quite like—old days."

If Tyrrell glanced at her as his sister left the room, Selma did not see him. She was sitting with one elbow resting on the arm of her chair, her cheek resting on her hand, as she had sat so often in that room with him, as he had found her after Miss Tyrrell's "at home" in May; and he began to read at once.

And he read with all the power he was master of, as no one else in London at that moment could have read, taxing every resource to the utmost, until, actor that he was, he almost convinced even himself with the wonderful invocation to the Spirit of Beauty which he had chosen for her. The poem was not long, but when he finished, Selma's breath was coming thick and fast, her lips were parted, her eyes fixed and dilated, as though they saw the vision the lines had conjured up. He waited a moment, watching her, and she had never looked so lovely. He saw the colour return slowly to her cheeks, he saw her lips tremble, and her eyes fill with tears, and then he said, abruptly, almost harshly:

"Selma, I must speak!"

She started violently, and turned to him, trying to smile, evidently not having taken in his words, and he went on, rapidly:

"Do you know, have you any conception of what you are doing? Take the word of a man who has known you all your life, who knows you better than you know yourself. You are bringing on yourself the bitterest fate the world knows—a lifetime of fruitless regret."

"Mr. Tyrrell!"

"Listen to me, Selma," he said, sternly.

"I shall not ask you to listen twice. You are throwing away in a moment of childish impulse the whole happiness of your life! You are 'in love,' you say, and your new toy is more to you than any other gift the world can offer. For the moment, yes! a year hence, no! You are an artist to your heart's core. Marry your cousin, and before the first year is out you will be fretting yourself to death—starving be-

cause not one of your truest instincts can find satisfaction!"

Selma was sitting just as the first words she had comprehended had transfixed her; the light touch of her hand upon the arm of her chair changed to a convulsive grip, her face white to the lips. Gradually, as the afternoon had worn on, her new interests had dropped away from her, she had forgotten the Corniahes she had forgotten even Roger, until Tyrrell's words suddenly recalled her to herself with a terrible sense of shock and collision between what were absolutely two distinct lives—the life in which her girlish love was all in all, and the life in which her artist instincts were called into play. He had spoken very quietly, without the faintest approach to passion, but with absolute conviction, and as she neither moved nor spoke, being utterly unable to collect herself, or find mental hold for herself, where everything seemed to be slipping from under her feet, he went on:

"Do you imagine, child, that you will always be—nineteen? That you will always love as you think you love now? That you have realised now all that life has to offer, that you will never want anything more? Have you been absolutely satisfied, even for these last two months?"

A sudden cry broke from Selma, and she wrung her hands passionately together as the colour rushed to her white face.

"I have!" she cried. "I was! Oh, I will not let it go! I will not let it go! I love him, Mr. Tyrrell! I love him! You know I love him!"

The voice was very young, very agonised, very appealing, and she let her face fall on her hands, and dropped both on the arm of her chair.

"I thought you loved your art!" answered Tyrrell. "You have—changed once. What assurance have you that you will not change again?" He paused, and then went on, carefully calculating his words, as the surest to act on the enthusiastic, idealist temperament he knew so well, high-flown in its youthful imaginativeness, as such a nature at nineteen could not fail to be: "Have you in your new infatuation once considered what it is that you are turning away from?" he said, slowly, in a low, deep tone. "A life of incessant labour and struggle, of achievement leading only to fresh effort, of conquest only revealing kingdoms yet to be

subdued. The servants of art know the beauty of their mistress by faith, and not by sight; she has no smiles for those whose very hearts have not been wrung to win them; but those who have once felt that smile live only to feel it again. [Selma, I thought she had smiled on you."

There was a long silence. Selma was absolutely still, except when a little quiver shook her from head to foot. Tyrrell was gazing straight into the fire. At last she lifted her face, white and drawn, and rose to her feet.

"May I go home now?" she said. Her voice was weak, and very low.

He rose at once, and answered her with his usual tone and manner:

"I hope it is not later than you wished!"

He took the hand she offered him, mechanically, at the door, and for a moment, as he looked down at her, there sprang into his eyes the expression with which he had looked at her after their dance together two nights before.

"Good night," he said, gently, "good night, Selma!"

MR. CARRUTHERS.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"I AM sure I don't know what is to be done about poor Sarah," said my mother, with a little sigh, as she laid down a letter she had just finished reading at breakfast.

I took it up, and ran my eye over its contents, while my mother meditatively sipped her coffee, and reflected on the situation.

"She is exactly like the proverbial bad penny—always turning up," I remarked, with some asperity, for I was not fond of the distant cousin who was the subject of discourse.

"Personally, I should be glad if she'd vary her movements a little by turning off," observed my brother George.

"No fear of that," I said. "Who would marry Sarah?"

"Who, indeed?" echoed George.

My mother laughed a soft little laugh, half-amused, half-pitiful.

"Poor Sarah!" she said, again. "Don't you think you are rather hard upon her? When a woman has no home, and no money, and, as it seems at present"—here she consulted her letter again—"no health, what is she to do? Charity certainly begins at home, and we cannot let her go to the workhouse."

When my mother spoke in that tone, both George and I knew, by long experience, that it was useless to argue further with her. She was as kind and sympathetic as the day was long; but she was a decided little woman to boot, and since my father's death, four years ago, she had held the reins of government with a firm hand. We therefore retired from the contest, George betaking himself to his office—he was an engineer—and I coming round to the fireplace, before which my mother was now standing, for the third time perusing Sarah's letter.

"She says she has had to give up her situation, and has not been able to leave the house for a week, though she hopes now to be out in a day or two, and—eh! what's this!" exclaimed my mother, suddenly catching sight of a postscript we had neither of us noticed. I looked over her shoulder, and we read:

"If you can do with me I should very much like to come to you for a short visit, not only on account of my health, but also because I have some news, perhaps more important to myself than to any one else, which I could then communicate personally, and which I expect will surprise you."

"Whatever does she mean?" I exclaimed, for once in my life fairly startled.

"I am glad," remarked my mother, in her most measured tones, "that I quite made up my mind to invite Sarah before I read this"—here she tapped the significant postscript with her first finger—"otherwise you might have fancied I asked her out of mere curiosity."

"Well," I answered, "I am not ashamed to confess that I am full of curiosity, and, for the first time in my life, I wish Cousin Sarah were here."

Four days later Cousin Sarah arrived. She was some half-dozen years older than I, and the prefix had doubtless been originally given as a kind of concession to the dignity of age. For other dignity Sarah had none. She was now about six-and-thirty, ordinary in personal appearance, and with a very average share of intellectual capacity: a foolish, kindly, garrulous, and, as we all thought, exceedingly simple-minded creature, utterly wanting in worldly wisdom, and without sufficient strength of character to be any one's enemy but her own. At the same time she had an air of confiding innocence about her which was apt to impress

strangers favourably, and a gift of small talk that amused her listeners until it became wearisome. Every one, indeed, seemed to weary of Sarah in time, but people were always sorry for her, or said they were, and always called her "poor Sarah." And in many ways she was greatly to be pitied. She had been brought up in a comfortable home with her only brother, and educated as girls were educated thirty years ago, when they were not expected to have to earn their own living. Just when she was grown up her father died, and then it was discovered that the ominous whispers which had been circulating about his affairs were all too true, and that he had left his wife and children the merest pittance. His wife never held up her head afterwards. In three months she was laid beside her husband; her son went away to Australia; and Cousin Sarah, poorly qualified though she was by Nature and training, had to eke out her slender means as a daily governess. When her brother started he promised to rescue her from her drudgery as soon as he had gained a competence; but he speedily married a young lady, whose acquaintance he had made in Melbourne, and his letters to his sister grew few and far between. In point of fact my mother was the only surviving relative who took any notice of her, and many a five-pound note did she send her to help out her slender salary, and many a long visit did Cousin Sarah pay us.

But this last visit seemed to stand out distinct and different from all the others. There was a mystery about it—and what woman does not love a mystery!—and the mystery made itself felt as soon as ever "poor Sarah" came into our warm, brightly-lighted little hall.

"You must have had a cold journey from London, my dear," said my mother, when the first greetings had been exchanged.

Sarah shivered slightly.

"Yes, it was bitterly cold. What a long way it is from London to Yorkshire!"

"I am glad to see you have such a nice, warm cloak to protect you from the weather," said my mother, patting the sleeve of the fur-lined wrap as she spoke, and taking no notice of the mild little grumble.

Sarah was standing just where the light from the hall-lamp fell full on her face, and I saw that she flushed rosy-red at the words.

"I—I am glad you like it," she answered, in a strangely hesitating manner. "It—it was a—a present from a friend."

"I am sure I am very pleased to hear you have such kind friends," remarked my unsuspecting mother.

But I had noticed that Cousin Sarah used the word in the singular, not the plural, number, and I felt more curious than ever as I conducted her upstairs to her room.

And throughout the evening Sarah talked so incessantly, and was so jerky in her manner, and so ambiguous in her utterances, that, when bedtime arrived, even my kindly mother had begun to marvel.

"Whatever can have come to the girl?" she said, when, according to my usual custom, I went into her room to say "good night." "She has not been at all like herself."

"I should not have thought it possible for her to be like any one else," I replied, viciously, for I had been much irritated by Sarah's demeanour. Then, seeing my mother looked shocked, I added, more by way of saying something to erase the effect of my former words, than because I entertained any such idea: "Perhaps she is going to be married, and does not quite know how to tell us?"

"Nonsense!" said my mother.

But she was; and the momentous communication was made in this wise. My mother, Sarah, and I were standing idly round the fire next morning, while the servant cleared away the breakfast things, when suddenly I noticed that Cousin Sarah wore a large and handsome gold locket, suspended round her neck by a velvet ribbon. I remarked upon it as something new.

"Yes," assented Sarah, quietly enough, though I could see she flushed slightly, "I have had a good many new things lately. They are all gifts from the same kind friend. I—I have been wanting to tell you about him."

"Oh!" exclaimed my mother and I, in chorus, too amazed for the moment to say more. Then I put my hands on Sarah's shoulders, and swinging her round so that she faced me, asked, breathlessly:

"What is his name? And where does he live? And have you his likeness in that locket?"

"To be sure I have. He gave me the

locket, and the cloak, and—and—other things, and his name is Mr. Carruthers."

"But—but isn't this rather sudden?" asked my mother, when she found her voice, after the unexpected shock.

"In one way, yes. In another, no," replied Sarah, who, now she had taken the final plunge, was much the most composed of the three. "I knew Mr. Carruthers very well many years ago; indeed, he asked me to marry him while I was quite a young girl. But he was just going out to India, and he was said to be a gambler, and there were other difficulties in the way. So he went, and I stayed behind; and I heard no more of him until a few months ago, when he came home, invalided, and with a pension, and sought me out once more. We have been engaged now two months."

"And you did not write to tell me?"

I could hear from my mother's tone that she was rather hurt at what certainly looked like ingratitude on Sarah's part, after all the kindness she had shown her. Meanwhile, Sarah had been unfastening the velvet from her neck, and now handed over the locket for inspection. I peered across my mother's shoulder, and saw the photograph of a handsome man, approaching middle age, with regular features, and thick, curly hair.

"He's very nice-looking, isn't he?" I asked, inwardly marvelling what could have been the attraction that had kept such a man so constant to my very ordinary cousin Sarah.

"Oh yes; that thing does not at all do him justice," replied Sarah, in an airy manner. "And he is extremely rich as well. He has private means, besides a good pension. And he has bought a splendid house close to Hyde Park, where he says we are to live. And he has got a brougham already, and a victoria for me; and wishes the wedding to be as soon as possible. And I hope you will be my bridesmaid, Claire, and come and pay us a long visit as soon as the honeymoon is over."

Thus Sarah ran on, and for once in our lives, neither my mother nor I tired of her garrulity. Nay, the whole affair seemed so strange that we were eager for every particular. We drew up chairs to the hearth at last, and sat talking about it well into the morning; or, rather, Sarah talked, and we listened, while Mr. Carruthers and his belongings grew momentarily in importance, and we began to feel quite a personal interest in him.

My mother was recalled to time present by the clock on the mantelpiece striking eleven.

"Well, my dear," she said, as she rose to go about her household duties, "I am very pleased for you, and I do sincerely trust Mr. Carruthers will make you a good husband, and that you will be very happy together."

"Thank you," responded Sarah. And then she took back her locket, and sat contemplating the face therein enraptured, in an absorbed, absent manner.

When George came home in the evening, I told him the wonderful news.

"Humph!" said he, "it is surprising what taste some fellows have."

But I could see that he was impressed, and his manner to Sarah was certainly more cordial than usual.

"And when am I to come and dance at your wedding?" he asked, after he had tendered his congratulations.

"Oh, we haven't settled that yet," replied Sarah, with a nervous little laugh. "You see Mr. Carruthers is so much out of health, all owing to that nasty Indian climate, and I am not strong either. When we are both better, we shall see about fixing the day."

This struck me as rather curious.

"But surely if you are both ill, you would be better nursing each other than suffering in solitude." The words did not quite express all I meant, because as Mr. Carruthers was reported to be so rich, and I knew that Sarah was so poor, I marvelled that such an ardent lover did not desire to throw the shelter of his name and his money round his impecunious bride with as little delay as might be. Even if the worst came to the worst, Sarah would be better off as his widow than as his fiancée. Delicacy, however, forbade me putting all this into words, and whether Sarah guessed my thoughts or not, she simply replied:

"Oh! I could not let Mr. Carruthers begin his married life by nursing me," a sentiment which my mother applauded.

Next day there lay a letter beside Sarah's plate on the breakfast-table: a thick and bulky letter, as I could not help seeing.

"From Mr. Carruthers," she explained, when she found it, "I was expecting to hear." Then she addressed herself to her tea and toast, and for a while took no further notice of the package. This annoyed me.

"You seem on very ceremonious terms with one another," I said, after watching her during several minutes, for her lethargic manner always irritated me. "Hasn't Mr. Carruthers got a Christian name?"

Sarah started, and coloured painfully.

"Who? Ha! Yes—what?" she stammered, "Mr. Carruthers got a Christian name; of course he has. He is called—Fred," there was the slightest possible hesitation over the last word which I was quick to notice.

"It does not seem to flow very glibly from your tongue," I retorted, some evil spirit prompting me to be as nasty as I could.

But Sarah had quite recovered her equanimity, and took no notice of my ill-natured remark. Indeed she sat, smiling placidly at the outside of her letter, until I felt quite ashamed of myself, and had the grace to say so.

"Oh! of course it must seem strange to you," assented Cousin Sarah, beginning to tear open her envelope. She unwrapped the closely-written sheets, holding them up, meanwhile, so that every one at the breakfast-table could see they were written in a bold, masculine hand, and then, with some excuse for her abrupt departure, she left the dining-room.

"Gone to enjoy the fellow's raptures in solitude, I suppose," laughed George.

"Poor Sarah! Very likely it is her first love-letter," said my mother, who had a decided vein of sentiment in her composition. "It would be only kind of us to keep her here until she is married, for I don't suppose Mr. Carruthers would hear of her taking another situation, even if she were fit for it. He seems such an ardent lover, I don't think we should have her for long."

And certainly Mr. Carruthers did seem ardent enough. Letters came from him as regularly as the post could bring them, and Sarah soon began to read aloud messages to my mother and myself, thanking us for our kindness to his dear little woman; making flattering comments on accounts she had evidently given him of her pleasant visit to Yorkshire; and expressing his earnest hope that he might soon have an opportunity of repaying the obligation under which we had placed both himself and Sarah.

We began to think Mr. Carruthers must be a very nice gentleman, and Sarah a very lucky woman; and we were sure of

it, a week later, when there arrived a box addressed to Mrs. Farquhar, wherein lay a bouquet of choice hot-house flowers, with Mr. Carruthers' card attached to it.

"How could he know my special weakness!" cried my mother, as she gazed delightedly at the fragrant blossoms.

"I—I believe I told Fred once how fond you were of flowers," began Sarah, bashfully, "and so he says in my note he has sent you a few, which he hopes you will accept as some small acknowledgement, on his part, of your goodness to me."

Her voice trembled while she spoke; but, no doubt she was touched, as we were, by the delicacy of her lover's gift.

"It is most kind of him to think of me," said my mother, surprise and delight mingling in her tone, "you must tell him so when you write. Nay, I think I should like to write myself, and let him know he could not have given me a greater pleasure. What is the address?"

Sarah looked a little confused for one moment; then she mumbled a number, and a street, which were indistinct even to my quick ears, and which I was quite sure my mother, who was growing slightly deaf, would never catch. Then she said, much more plainly:

"I am going to write myself to-day. Perhaps it will save you trouble if I enclose your letter with mine."

"Very well," replied my unsuspecting parent, "you shall have my note before the post leaves."

There had been a slight expression of uneasiness on Sarah's face while this little matter arranged itself; but now she looked radiant once more, and she spent most of the afternoon in inditing an epistle, whose length fairly amazed me. But then I had never been in love, and, for the first time in my life, I felt almost envious of her.

After that flowers seemed to arrive constantly. Sometimes they were varied by a book or trinket for Sarah, and once there came a gold ring, with "Mizpah" engraved upon it, encased in a case bearing a London jeweller's address.

"You really are a most fortunate woman to have secured the affection of such a man as Mr. Carruthers must be," said my mother, when she too was shown the "Mizpah" ring. "You must want to see him after being separated so long, and I am really anxious to make his acquaintance. Do you think he could be persuaded to come and spend a few days with us?"

Sarah shuffled uneasily on her chair.

"I—I am afraid not," she said, at last, when the silence was becoming painful. "You see, he is so delicate, and has such bad attacks, and the air is so much keener here than in London, and I know his doctors have forbidden him to travel."

She spoke hurriedly, and seemed to me much more disturbed than my mother's simple proposal warranted. But my mother appeared to see nothing unusual in her manner.

"Well, then, we will say nothing about it at present, my dear," she said, kindly. "I only hope he will soon be stronger, and, as I quite intend you to be married from here, we shall certainly see him when he comes to take you away."

"You are very kind," replied Sarah, but it struck me there was no enthusiasm in her tone.

"Have you any idea when the wedding will be?" continued my mother, suddenly lifting her eyes from her work, and looking Sarah full in the face.

"I—I don't know, I am sure," answered Sarah, the colour flushing up into her pale cheeks.

"The wonder to me is that you haven't fixed it long ago," I remarked, in an emphatic tone. "You neither of you seem to get any stronger, and if you go on waiting for what does not come, you will go on waiting for ever."

Sarah wriggled about under my gaze, evidently very ill at ease. Then she sighed.

"Yes, it is a great trial to both of us—the delay, I mean; but trials are the lot of some people in this world. I think they are mine."

She looked as though she were just going to burst out crying, and I felt I had perhaps been rather hard on her, and so let the subject drop; but at night, when I was alone with my mother, I returned to the subject.

"Mother," said I, "does it ever strike you as rather remarkable that Mr. Carruthers is—well, nothing but Mr. Carruthers?"

The answering suspicion, which must have been lying dormant in my mother's mind, showed itself on her face.

"You surely don't think!—" she began.

"I think nothing," I interrupted her, "I only asked what you thought."

And to that she gave me no answer, except "that she meant to speak seriously to Sarah to-morrow."

And speak she did. Cousin Sarah confessed that her arguments were unanswerable, wept a little, and loudly bemoaned her evil fortune; but her resolve was fixed not to become a burden on her dear Fred, by marrying him in her present delicate state of health, while he also was too honourable a man to inflict on her the care of an invalid husband. What a quixotic couple they were!

"Would it do for one of you to recover without the other?" I enquired, rather maliciously.

"Oh, yes," responded Cousin Sarah, in her usual guileless fashion; "I should be only too delighted to have the right to become Fred's nurse."

"Then, my dear, you had better devote all your energies to growing strong yourself," said my mother, with ready sympathy. "You look better since you came, and perhaps in another week or two——"

"Yes, yes; I shall be quite well then," interrupted Sarah, hastily.

And so the weeks passed on, and flowers continued to arrive for my mother, and little nicknacks for Sarah; and if Mr. Carruthers's ardour stopped short of naming the day, why, his intended bride was surely the chief sufferer.

When Cousin Sarah had been with us about a month, my brother George came home one evening earlier than usual, and informed us that he had to go to London on business by the night mail.

"And I shall have an hour to spare to-morrow, Sarah," he announced, "which I mean to devote to making the acquaintance of my new relative. So please give me Mr. Carruthers's address. I dare say he will be glad to hear of you first hand; and I will be sure and deliver any pretty messages you like to entrust to me."

Sarah and I were sitting sewing in the drawing-room, and though she kept her head bent over her needlework, I could not fail to see how her hand shook when she tried to draw out her embroidery cotton. George looked at her with a curious expression on his face, and I looked at George.

There was a pause.

"It is very kind of you," she said, at last; "but it—it would be no use. Fred isn't in London. He left some time ago."

"Whew!" whistled George, softly. Then, noting my look of extreme surprise at his lapse of manners, he asked,

pointedly: "Then where may he be now, please!"

He waited for a reply, with the same curious expression still playing about his lips. And at last it came, slowly, and evidently unwillingly:

"I—I—believe he—is—in Bath."

"Oh! that's rather out of my beat. I am afraid I shall have to defer making his acquaintance to some future season. Good-bye, Sarah."

An expression of intense relief flashed across Sarah's face, and though she bent her head assiduously over her work, both George and I caught it. I followed him out into the hall.

"What is it? Whatever is it?" I cried, eagerly, seizing him by the arm.

For answer he pulled me into the empty dining-room, and shut the door.

"Claire," he began, solemnly, "there's something queer about this Carruthers. I've suspected for some time back; now I'm sure."

"Oh, George!" I gasped, scarcely knowing what I said, in my amazement at his emphatic manner.

"Yes," he continued, heedless of my exclamation. "If Carruthers isn't in London, he certainly is not at Bath, for I happened to post the letters myself last night, and among them was one to his usual address, 87, Connaught Square, Hyde Park. What do you make of that; eh? And I'll tell you something else," he proceeded, for I was too astonished to speak. "When Sarah was reading what she said was such a long letter from him yesterday, she forgot there was a looking-glass just behind her, which showed me that there were not above a dozen lines on the first page, though she turned over the blank sheets with such an absorbed air; and what writing there was was not in the same hand as usual, I'm tolerably sure. Yet she told us all the letter came from Carruthers."

"Certainly she did," I answered.

"Well, I advise you to keep your eyes open," were his parting words; and I must confess they fell ominously on my ears.

In thinking over what George had told her, many other little things recurred to my mind, which, though trifling in themselves, had certainly struck me at the time they happened, but had not dwelt long in my memory. Probably my thoughts were reflected in my manner, for I noticed that

Sarah seemed to avoid my society as much as she could, and seldom mentioned Mr. Carruthers in my presence. When she was alone with my mother she still continued to sing his praises, and congratulate herself on her good fortune in securing such a lover; but with me she was extremely reserved, and the relations between us were growing very strained, when, to my sincere pleasure, I received a note from a friend who lived in the neighbourhood of Bath, asking me to visit her as soon as I could, and to fix my own day. My mother urged me to accept, saying that she and Sarah would be company for one another; but as our opinions on that point did not quite agree, we did not discuss the subject in Sarah's presence. Hence the latter was in entire ignorance of my invitation, when, three days after George's departure, the post brought her a letter which evidently gave her great concern—so evidently, indeed, that my mother at once asked her what was the matter.

"It is about Mr. Carruthers," she explained in a voice choked by emotion. "He was ill in London, and the doctors ordered him to Bath, and now he has got there, the air does not suit him, and he is worse. He begs me to come to him at once, and, of course, I must go."

She hid her face in her hands, and seemed as though she could scarcely control her sobs. My mother's soft heart was touched.

"I am so sorry, Sarah. I will do anything I can to help you; but," hesitatingly, "will it be quite proper—"

"Will what be quite proper?" asked Sarah, sharply, lifting her head, and pushing back her disordered hair from her eyes. Then she seemed to gather herself together as it were, and added, in a softer tone: "Oh, yes, I remember. My going to Fred you mean. Surely his sister is with him."

It was the first time we had heard of any such relative, and we were both rather surprised.

"In that case," said my mother, a little stiffly, as though she felt she had been somewhat imposed upon, "I can have no possible objection. Where are they staying, Sarah?"

"At the 'Crescent Hotel.'"

"Very well; when do you want to go?"

"Oh, as soon as possible. This very minute! He may be dying now!" cried Sarah, throwing up her arms in great excitement.

"You must try and be calm, my dear. These ebullitions of feeling will do no good to any one," said my mother quite severely, for her. "You cannot start to-day. We are so far from the station that the through train would be gone before you could reach it. But I will order a cab for to-morrow morning, and, as I don't like to send you off alone in such trouble, Claire shall accompany you. It is most fortunate she had an invitation to visit some friends near Bath only yesterday, and can fix her own time for going. Claire, you had better write Mrs. Bristowe by the early post."

I was looking at Sarah, and saw her face fall as she heard my kind, innocent mother's proposal. This made me all the more determined to be her travelling companion, so I answered with alacrity:

"Certainly, mother," and prepared to write my note.

But before I had finished "My dear Mrs. Bristowe," I was startled by Sarah's voice at my elbow.

"Pray, don't think of accompanying me," she cried, wildly; "I would rather be alone, I would, indeed. I am used to travelling, and to taking care of myself. I would not put you to any inconvenience for the world—I—I——"

"It will be neither a trouble nor inconvenience," I interrupted her. "Did you not hear my mother say I had had an invitation to Bath? and I may as well go one day as another. The pleasure of your company has quite decided me to travel with you to-morrow."

Sarah was furious. I knew she was, and rather rejoiced thereat. Once in Bath, it would go hard with me if I did not manage to see this mysterious Mr. Carruthers, either dead or alive. I was a young woman of determined will, and was not easily turned from my purpose. Sarah probably felt this, and argued the matter no further; but next morning, while I was dressing, a rap came to my door. I opened it. There stood Sarah.

"I—I have a racking headache," she began, as soon as she saw me. "Can you give me some sal volatile, or anything? I don't know how to sit up. It will be quite out of the question for me to travel to-day. I must write to Fred."

She certainly did look ill. There were black rings round her eyes, and her face was deathly pale.

"Hadn't you better telegraph!" I suggested; "he will hear sooner. I shall

be telegraphing to my friends, and can send off both messages at the same time."

"Do you mean you won't go?" cried Sarah, staring at me with blank amazement. Her face had been white before, but it turned of a ghastly pallor now. "Oh, you must not let my stupidity keep you from your friends. I should never forgive myself. They will be expecting you."

"And Mr. Carruthers will be expecting you," I remarked, looking steadily at her, until she quailed before my glance.

"But I have such a headache," she repeated again.

"Then the sooner you lie down the better," I replied, calmly. "I will order you some tea, and if you keep quiet until the evening, very likely you will be able to travel to-morrow—with me to take care of you."

And she was. Probably Sarah realized that I was not to be shaken off, and that further delay would be useless. So, with a very ill grace, she accepted my company, and we prepared to start. When I went to say "good-bye" to my mother, she remarked:

"I hope, Claire, you will make an effort to see this Mr. Carruthers in Bath. I am not quite happy about Sarah, and we are her nearest relatives. It seems to me that however ill he is, it would be better for him to marry her than to leave her to run about the world alone in this fashion."

"I will see him if he is to be seen," I answered, and away we went.

Sarah was very restless and fidgety all the way to Derby. There we had to wait some minutes, and when she discovered this she said she wanted to go and send a telegram.

"To Mr. Carruthers?" I asked, for so far as I knew, neither letter nor telegram had informed him of our change of plans.

"Yes, of course. I want to tell him to send the brougham to meet me, and not the victoria. It is so chilly, and he never allows me to drive in a cab now. I have had the use of his carriages ever since he returned to England."

Sarah stepped on to the platform. I followed her.

"Oh, pray don't trouble yourself. I shan't be gone a minute," she cried, as soon as she perceived my intention.

"It is no trouble, but a pleasure," I rejoined, with equal politeness.

So we went together to the office. I noticed that Sarah wrote the words of her telegram first, and added the direction

when she thought I was not looking, holding her hand carefully over the form, ostensibly to prevent it slipping about on the mahogany counter. When this was done we resumed our journey, and sped rapidly along, past towns and villages, until we neared Bath. We did not talk much by the way, for Sarah was manifestly uneasy in my society, and I was suspicious in hers. I believe it was a relief to both of us when our journey reached its end.

Then Sarah jumped hastily out on to the platform.

"If you will look after the luggage," she said, "I will just run along, and see whether Fred has sent the carriage."

She did not wait for my answer, but was gone; and as I could not see her in the crowd, I proceeded to hunt for our boxes. Presently she came back again.

"It is all right. Fred has got my telegram," she cried. "The brougham is waiting over yonder," and Sarah pointed with her finger across the heads of the struggling people who were clamouring for their trunks. "The coachman says Fred is better, and anxiously expecting me; so I will hurry off at once. Good-bye; and many thanks for your company."

But I had no intention of being shaken off so easily. I followed Sarah, and, to my great surprise, saw her go up to a shabby-looking man, arrayed in a second-hand livery top-coat, who drove a pair of screws in a shabby carriage, which had evidently been sent from some livery-stable. Sarah's trunk was placed beside the driver; she herself mounted into the vehicle. But as she pulled up the window she saw me gazing after her, and her pale face flushed crimson.

Needless to say, I presented myself next morning at the hotel which had been mentioned as Mr. Carruthers' stopping-place. No such person was known there. And when I enquired further for a Miss Sarah Gardiner, who had travelled with me, and was supposed to have arrived last night, the porter could only shake his head, and look mystified. Cousin Sarah and Mr. Carruthers were alike missing. I am inclined to think that possibly Sarah did not spend the night in Bath at all, for, after trying to throw dust in my acute eyes by driving off in state in her hired carriage, she could, by returning quickly to the station, catch a night mail to London, and effectually lose herself in the

great city. Anyway, about ten days after her disappearance, my mother received a note from her with the London post-mark, stating that she had decided to join her brother in Australia, and had taken passage in the steam-ship "Sirius," which sailed that very day. We found, from the shipping news, that such a vessel did actually leave the London Docks at the date mentioned; but whether Sarah travelled by it or not we never knew.

That note was the last we heard of her. Equally unsatisfactory were our enquiries after Mr. Carruthers. No such person was known at the address she gave in London; no such person had stayed at the "Crescent Hotel," Bath. We were, therefore, driven to conclude that he must have existed only in Cousin Sarah's imagination; but what could have been her reason for the mystification, we entirely failed to guess.

And the flowers?

Well, a short time after the "Sirius" sailed, came a London florist's account, amounting to several pounds, for bouquets which had been sent by order of a Miss Sarah Gardiner to my mother's address; and, under the circumstances, she judged it wisest quietly to pay the little bill, and to say nothing about it.

SOME OLD LONDON SPAS.

It is a little difficult at the present day to think of London as a watering-place. We are not accustomed to associate the idea of the metropolis with mineral-waters—except in a bottled condition. If we remember the time when "drinking the waters" was all the fashion in England, we naturally think at once of Tunbridge Wells and the Pantiles, or of Bath, under the despotic rule of Beau Nash. And yet the time was when London and the suburbs enjoyed a reputation for their health-giving waters, little short of these fashionable rivals. The names of various streets and districts of London still serve to remind us of the fresh springs and running brooks which must have rendered the town and its environs so charming in early days. The northern suburbs were especially favoured in this respect. Here we have Clerkenwell—where, in the fourteenth century, the clerks of London assembled from time to time "to play some large history of Holy Scripture"—Holywell, and Saint Clement's Well. Such

names as Coldbath Fields, Spa Fields, Well Walk—at Hampstead—and many others, are derived in a similar fashion.

Some of these springs were found to have medicinal properties, and it was not long before their virtues were loudly proclaimed by the medical faculty. Others, again, were, in reality, not mineral at all, or contained a very small mixture of earthy salts.

In the last century almost every evil that flesh is heir to was deemed capable of being removed, or at any rate, alleviated, by a course of mineral-waters. The merits ascribed to many of these springs had, it is almost needless to say, often little or no foundation in fact. But the virtues of the Spas did not much trouble the minds of their patrons. The fashionable world went to these spots to amuse itself, more than for any other reason, and if some of the crowd were really ailing, imagination went a great way to effect a cure.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century, several London springs began to be patronised. Among these were Sadler's Wells and the Islington Spa. About 1683, one Sadler, the possessor of a music-house near the head of the New River at Islington, discovered a spring while digging in his garden. This spring soon became famous, and all the delights of the tea-gardens of the period were superadded to the more serious task of drinking the waters. At one period it was calculated that between five and six hundred persons visited the spring and gardens every morning during the season. The patients were recommended to "eat carraways," or to drink a glass of Rhenish or white wine with their morning dose. The gentlemen were even permitted to smoke a pipe or two. Gradually the attractions of the tea-gardens proved more potent than the merits of the waters, and the class of visitors became less and less select. In 1765 a theatre took the place of the old music-house—the famous Sadler's Wells, associated with memories of Grimaldi, the prince of clowns, and where, in later days, Phelps produced so many of Shakespeare's plays.

In the vicinity of Sadler's Wells was Islington Spa, or, "New Tunbridge Wells." These two spots have often been confounded; but were probably distinct centres of amusement at a time when the whole district abounded in springs. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, Islington Spa came into notice. The modest sum of threepence then secured admission to the

gardens, a fact which caused the wells to be nicknamed by the vulgar, the "Three-penny Academy."

"Merry Islington" must have justified its name in those days. It was long famous for its dairies, its syllabubs, and custards; and produced as good cakes as Chelsea did buns. The citizens of London loved the spot well, and 'prentice lads and merry damsels made the village a favourite resort in summer. An advertisement in the "Gazette" for May, 1690, informed the world "That the Well near Islington, called New Tunbridge, will be open on Monday next, the 25th instant, during the whole season, for drinking the medicinal water; where the poor may have the same gratis, bringing a certificate under the hand of any known Physician or Apothecary."

Again, in 1700, we are told "that New Tunbridge Wells, at Islington, will be opened the 5th day of May, where will be music and dancing all day long every Monday and Thursday during this summer season. No masque admitted."

The year 1733 may be said perhaps to have been the time of the high-water mark of its reputation, for in that year the Princesses Amelia and Caroline, the daughters of George the Second, drank the waters there. Lady M. Wortley Montague also claims some share in having made Islington Spa a resort of fashion.

About this time, the gatherings at the wells must have been of a mixed character, for, according to a poem, called the "Humours of New Tunbridge Wells," printed in 1734, the company is made to consist of "Lords, milkmaids, Duchesses and clowns, in their all-various déshabille." There were also present light-fingered knaves, wits, captains, politicians, and poets: altogether, a most heterogeneous assembly.

A curious note to an advertisement of the Spa for 1760, bears evidence, however, of the fashion of many of its frequenters, for "Ladies and gentlemen, who come from Hanover and Grosvenor Squares and Parts adjacent," were informed that they could come to the wells "without going over the stones, by striking into the new road from Portland Street to Islington, which makes it an exceedingly pleasant airing from all parts of the town and neighbourhood." The proprietor also informed his patrons that no other liquors save tea and coffee were provided, "which enables him to keep out all bad and improper company."

One reason why these inland watering-places were so popular in the first half of the last century is the fact that sea-side bathing was unknown. The beginning of the popularity of our sea-coast towns dates from about 1753, when Dr. Richard Russell's treatise on the use of sea-water in diseases of the glands became generally known. From that date what had once been obscure fishing villages blossomed out into stately watering-places, and before the close of the century we find Cowper complaining of this new passion for the sea. All classes, he says:

In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys;
And all, impatient of dry land, agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.

However, Islington still managed to hold its own for some time longer, as we gather from a piece of George Colman's first acted in 1776, entitled the "Spleen, or Islington Spa," in which a lady thus commends the place to her friend: "The Spa grows as genteel as Tunbridge, Brixton, Southampton, or Margate. Live in the most sociable ways upon earth—all the company acquainted with each other. Walks, balls, raffles and subscriptions. And then Eliza's wedding, you know, was owing to the Spa. Oh, the watering-places are the only places to get young women lovers and husbands."

The new attractions of the sea-side in the end, however, proved too much for Islington Spa; its fame became less from year to year, and the fashionable world no longer resorted there. But though the fame of the spring was eclipsed, Islington still retained something of its rural character in the present century, for Charles Lamb, who at one time had a cottage in Colebrook Road, Islington, tells us that the New River ran close to his house, and behind was a spacious garden with vines, pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, and cabbages. The devastating onward march of bricks and mortar has long since passed over the

Arbours closely shaded o'er
With climbing shrubs and sycamore.

And the cry of "any fresh and fair spring water here" no longer meets the ear.

Another favourite resort in the neighbourhood of Islington was Bagnigge Wells. About 1760, two mineral springs were discovered in the garden of Bagnigge House—once, it is said, the summer

residence of Nell Gwynne. In the prologue to Colman's "Bon Ton," among other characteristics of "good form" at that period, was "drinking tea on summer's afternoons at Bagnigge Wells with China and gilt spoons."

These wells were, however, never so fashionable as those at Islington; and, as London increased in size, visitors there found they swallowed more dust than air. Nevertheless, for many years they continued to be a favourite spot, where 'prenticed youths could "enjoy the Sunday feast, and City matrons boast their Sabbath rest."

In an advertisement for July, 1775, the proprietor of Bagnigge Wells informs the public "that both the chalybeate and purging waters are in the greatest perfection ever known, and may be drunk at 3d. each person, or delivered at the pump-room at 8d. per gallon." About this time the place was described as consisting of several beautiful walks, ornamented with a great variety of curious shrubs and flowers, all in the utmost perfection. About the centre of the garden was a small round fish-pond, in the midst of which was a curious fountain, representing Cupid bestriding a swan, which was wont to spout the water through its beak to a great height. In addition to these varied attractions, "genteel" seats for company were to be found in every part of the garden. A visitor to these wells in 1843 has given us an amusing description of their condition at that date. The ruins of the ancient wells, together with the adjoining grounds, were entirely open to the public, although the thick layer of brickbats with which they were covered rendered walking a task of some difficulty. The "well" was still visible—a round hole in the ground behind the ruins, piled up with rubbish and mosaics of oyster-shells.

For those who wished to extend their rambles a little farther from the town, the many springs of greater London held out a delightful prospect of green fields and shady lanes; a stroll to the lovely village of Dulwich, where the world of fashion gathered to drink the waters at the close of the seventeenth century, or to Streatham Spa, which was a favourite resort at the same period, and was even popular as late as 1792.

Richmond, too, had its wells, first discovered about the year 1680. A few years later the usual round of balls and

concerts was in full swing. One notice tells us that "dancing will begin at 8 o'clock, price 5 shillings each ticket. Note.—That the tyde of flood begins of one of the clock in the afternoon, and flows till 5, and ebbs till 12, for the conveniency of returning"; which shows us Father Thames in a very obliging humour! These springs were in repute for nearly half a century, their decline in popularity dating from about 1750. Richmond, however, with its matchless surroundings, could far better afford to dispense with such fame as it drew from its wells than many another town less richly gifted with river and forest scenery.

Nearer the busy haunts of men, again, were Kilburn Wells, not far from Paddington. In a number of the "Public Advertiser," for July, 1773, we read that "this happy spot, equally celebrated for its rural situation, extensive prospect, and the acknowledged efficacy of its waters, is most delightfully situated on the site of the once famous Abbey of Kilburn, on the Edgware Road. A plentiful larder. Breakfasting and hot loaves."

The "Bell Inn," at Kilburn Wells, was for many years a popular suburban resort, and, like Sadler's Wells and Cuper's, a famous place for supper-parties.

Curious as it may seem, Lambeth once also boasted of a mineral spring, never, indeed, the resort of fashion, but a popular place of amusement. The water, however, was much esteemed, and was sold in the reign of William the Third at "a penny a quart; the same price paid by Saint Thomas's Hospital." The wells opened for the season regularly on Easter Monday, being closed during the winter season.

At this time Lambeth was a favourite spot for diversions of all kinds. The neighbourhood abounded in gardens, and "Lambeth Fields" were celebrated for their medicinal herbs and various sweet-scented flowers. The most characteristic place of resort in Lambeth was, perhaps, Cuper's Gardens, near Waterloo Bridge, the assemblies at which were, for over half a century, more popular than select.

With the exception, perhaps, of Islington, no suburban watering-place was so fashionable as Hampstead during the early years of the last century. Numberless associations gather round this favoured suburb. Poets and statesmen, artists and men of letters, have vied with one another in singing its praises, its range of heath and pond, its sloping greens—

Woods that let mansions through,
And cottaged vales with pillowy fields beyond,
And clumps of darkening pines and prospects blue.

Beautiful indeed must Hampstead have been in the days when the brave and fair promenaded up and down the lime avenue of Well Walk. A number of the "Post-man," for the year 1700, informs us that the Hampstead Waters were carried into town every day, and might be bought at Holborn or Caaring Cross. A certain apothecary, named Richard Philps, not only sold them every morning, fresh, at threepence per flask—at the "Eagle and Child," in Fleet Street—but sent them out to people's own houses at a penny per flask more, though customers had to mark well the caution to "return the flask."

As the fame of the waters increased, Hampstead became as gay, not to say as dissipated, a spot as any in England. From 1701 to 1710 the advertisements of the day teem with notices of the different amusements and entertainments provided for the patrons of Hampstead Wells. The catering was announced to be excellent; some might divert themselves on a pleasant bowling-green, while others danced; a stage-coach and chariot could be got to take visitors from the wells back to their respective town houses at any time in the evening or morning.

In 1727 the poet Gay, author of the "Fables" and the "Beggars' Opera," drank the waters, and was cured of the colic, while another frequenter of the springs was Dr. Arbuthnot, the friend of P. pa.

The comedy of "Hampstead Heath," acted at Drury Lane in 1706, gives a good idea of the life of the suburb at that period—a sweet, rural spot, which seemed "an adjournment o' the nation, where business is laid fast asleep; varieties of diversions feast our fickle fanciers, and every man wears a face of pleasure. The cards fly, the bowls run, the dice rattle; some lose their money with ease and negligence, and others are well pleased to pocket it."

Such was this Monte-Carlo of a past day. Small wonder that so many of the giddy throng considered "this Hampstead a charming place." In Well Walk—once the fashionable morning lounge for the owners of powdered wigs and enormous hoops—lived and died the painter John Constable, loving, as he was wont to say, "every stile and stump and lane in the village; as long as I am able to hold a brush I shall never cease to paint them." Mrs. Barbauld at

one time also lived in Well Walk, and it was here that Keats wrote his "Endymion," and his "Eve of Saint Agnes," and here Coleridge and Leigh Hunt would often pay him a visit. Hampstead Wells continued to be a resort down to an early part of the present century; but its fashionable fame began to decline from the period when George the Third and his Court lent their patronage to Cheltenham. Another celebrated place of entertainment in this neighbourhood was Belsize House, which was announced in "Mist's Journal" to be opened to the public on Easter Monday, 1720, "with an uncommon solemnity of music and dancing." By a handbill it was added that the park, wilderness, and gardens had been wonderfully improved, and filled with variety of birds "which compose a most melodious and delightful harmony." Persons inclined to walk and divert themselves had the additional inducement held out to them of being able to breakfast on tea or coffee "as cheap as at their own chambers." To ensure the safety of visitors, "twelve stout fellows" were told off to patrol the road between Belsize and London. On a certain Monday in June, 1772, the fashionable news reporter of the day notices that the appearance of nobility and gentry at Belsize was so great that three or four hundred coaches passed the gates. On this occasion a wild deer was hunted down and killed in the park before the company, "which," continues the chronicler, "gave three hours' diversion," to all save the deer.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "Louis Draycott," "Geoffrey Stirling," "Aunt Hopsy's Foundling," etc.

CHAPTER VI. "FOR HER DEAR SAKE"

MR. JONES had so completely identified himself with his friends, the Clutterbucks, that their troubles oppressed him as his own might have done; nay, perhaps, more heavily still, for he felt like one stumbling and groping in the dark. He was greatly exercised in mind as to what was the exact nature of the cloud that brooded over the house at Sleima, touching even little Phil's bright head with its sinister shadow.

For cloud there was. Of this he was fully convinced.

Naturally enough, too, he was puzzled by that strange—one might almost say wild—appeal made to him by Miss Graham. Why should she urge him to leave the island because others had done or were doing so? Was it possible that she suspected how dear he held her in his heart of hearts, and would fain warn him of the hopelessness of his passion?

Hardly could that be, since time and place were so strangely chosen, and the mood so sudden, so unexplained. With all the children looking on, with no word or sign on his own part that called for repression, surely the notion that her words were words thus fraught with significance would not hold water.

Taken mightily aback by Mabel's most unlooked-for appeal, it had been hard for Amphlett Jones to recover himself, and during that moment of hesitation, Mrs. Carbonel was ushered into the room by Jim, who had caught a glimpse of her on the door-step, darted out, and pulled her in. Pretty Mrs. Carbonel was a special friend of Mabel's, and the women kissed and held each other by the hands, as women will in times of trouble; so Mr. Jones, feeling himself in the way, took a hurried leave, and made his way through the sunshine with a heavy heart in his breast and a dazzle before his eyes.

Next day seemed to him the longest and the hottest he had ever known; and to make matters worse, all his best friends appeared to be on "duty" of some kind or other. Even Ginger was unavailable. The obsequious Michael watched him with a keen and even cruel interest. He wondered why the "—Inglesse" should "make plenty sad," when all the time he had plenty of money. He used the expletive apparently under the idea that it was a component part of the title of every inhabitant of the British Isles, and one not to be omitted by any cultured person. He was in the habit of telling people that he was "quite Inglesse by the time that now is;" but no one seemed to be convinced on the point.

Waiting with painful assiduity on Mr. Jones at the late Italian breakfast one indulges in, in that climate, this quite-English person ventured upon a suggestion.

"Too much sun, sare? Not good for Signor Inglesse. Too much sun on top of se head make him plenty sick, sare; make him what you call in England a very sad dog."

There are men who find a certain satis-

faction in being dubbed "sad dogs"; but of these Mr. Jones was not one. He showed no signs of rallying from his sad fit. He leaned his head upon his hand, and was blind to the attractions of his grapes as black as aloe-berries, and aspoll as golden as the "yellow boy" beloved and coveted of Jim.

So Michael came to the conclusion that the Signor Inglesse was sickening for the "madness of the dogs," a disease also peculiar to the English people.

If this should prove to be the case, doubtless they would smother the poor man between two of the best feather-beds in the establishment—it would not do to be niggardly over the extinction of such a wealthy client. The ceremony would be a sad one, yet deeply interesting and exciting, and then, when all should be over, who would possess all the loose money that so oftentimes jingled musically in the pockets of the signor—who?

It is well for all of us that we cannot read the thoughts of those around us.

It could scarcely have cheered the heavy heart of Amphlett Jones to know that the olive-skinned Maltese, who kept whisking away any intrusive mosquito or enquiring fly with the napkin he carried with such a jaunty air—the soft-voiced servitor, who, with a confidential and even tender manner besought him to partake of Château Lafitte, soda-water and milk, or delicate fricandeau of chicken—was mentally engaged in pressing him to death between two feather-beds, and acting as self-appointed executor.

Be the day weary, or be the day long,
At length it neareth to evensong.

and so with this day that had been one of such torment to Mr. Jones. The glare faded; the dead, deserted streets began to be alive again; ladies, driving dainty little carriages, drew up at the shop doors, and tripped in to inspect goods, whilst smart soldier-grooms held the horses' heads. Men in uniforms, men in mufti, men off steamers in all sorts of quaint and original costumes, passed and repassed the hotel door. There was going to be a new opera that evening; tongues wagged, and speculations as to the success of the venture were exchanged. Seated by the open window of his comfortable sitting-room, in fact with his feet in the balcony, Mr. Jones could hear the pleasant clatter of voices from below, and could see through the thin blue smoke of his cigarette—he had taken to cigarettes, had Mr. Jones,

since he came to the sunny island—the passers-by on the opposite side of the road.

Michael was still on the watch. Was “the madness of dogs” approaching, or had he been deceived in supposing the malady to be so common amongst Englishmen? If what he half desired, half feared, were really the case, the Signor Ingless would perhaps suddenly rush out of the hotel, run violently down the street, and have to be recovered by the police; but no, no such strange catastrophe came to pass. Never had the gentleman in question been more calm, more sedate, more collected. He put on his large, shady hat; dusted the cigarette-ash from his clothes; took absolutely no notice of Michael; and then, going leisurely down the shallow stairs, strolled equally leisurely down the street.

“It is not the madness of the dogs; it is the madness of the heart. He is in love, as they say, up to the ears and the head,” cried Michael, in an ecstasy, to his friend the waiting-maid, and together they peeped at Mr. Jones from the balcony.

The unconscious object of this scrutiny went straight ahead, under his white umbrella, with all the calm composure of a Chinese mandarin, and so on through the Porto Reale, across the drawbridge that spans the ditch where so many brave dead are lying, along the inner glacis, and thus into Floriana Gardens. On one hand lay the cornstores, flat and barren in the sunshine; on the other, the wide, noble sweep of one of the finest parade-grounds in all our foreign possessions.

How grand did that ground look when filled with troops from end to end, while the “feu de jote” ran from line to line like a milk-white ribbon rapidly unfolded; when A.D.C.’s galloped hither and thither as if life and death were at stake, and the fate of nations depended upon the instantaneous delivering of a message; when the horses that were not yet quite accustomed to fire stood bolt upright on their hind-legs, and those that were used to the rattle and the riot stood with all four legs firmly planted, and a look of contempt in their knowing eyes for the prancing, rearing tyros—a look that seemed to say, “Just wait till you’ve heard all this din as often as I have, and you’ll know better than make such fools of yourselves!”

Then the march past!

The beautiful even tramp of the massed men, the grace with which the captains of companies gave the salute, as they passed

the group of personages in cocked hats and feathers, and dignity and importance to match; the suave courtesy of the potentate for whose benefit, and in whose honour, the show was convened, as with emphatic wave of the hand, he congratulated the General commanding on the brilliant efficiency of the troops forming his brigade; the waving of plumes, the glancing of swords in the sunshine, the merry jangle of bands.

And then that terrible occasion when a little white, fluffy dog, which had been taught to sit up at the end of the line of number ten company of a certain regiment, presented his little white person before the General, his staff, and other notabilities, presented arms, too—or rather paws—to the best of his ability, and gave three tiny, sharp, shrill barks—also as he had been taught to do—“for the Queen”; that occasion on which the said General’s voice—at no time by any means that of a sucking-dove—roared down the lines, “Whose dog is that?” and not a soul came forward to claim the sinner; nor yet dare any man stoop to pick him up and carry him to the rear. That day cannot be forgotten, but must be laid by with other droll, and sad, and tender memories of a dear and bygone time.

But I am leaving Mr. Jones far too long straying in the Floriana Gardens, with their endless tangle of creeping plants, and stone benches here and there for the rest and comfort of the weary.

Mr. Jones turned out of an archway to the right, and found himself in front of a row of tall, narrow, many-balconied houses facing full on to the parade-ground, and consequently enjoying very special privileges on review days—houses all of stone, walls, and floors, and stairs; with green outside shutters to some windows, and gay striped blinds hanging across others. At one of these pleasant-looking abodes Mr. Jones stopped. Maltese fashion, the door stood wide open, and he was just going to ring, when the kindly head of Dr. Musters looked forth from a chamber on the ground-floor.

“You here!” said that worthy man. “Come in, come in! Glad to see you; Amelia is upstairs—she’ll be delighted. Mrs. Crashleigh has just looked in, and they are going to have some tea——”

Now Mr. Jones reflected that he had no wish to see “Amelia,” nor yet Mrs. Crashleigh, a lady of whom he had heard a good deal, and who rather affected Mrs.

Musters because that matron was so inconceivably respectable, and she herself stood in need of cover of that sort occasionally. But Mr. Jones had no fancy to listen to her shrill voice, or face Mrs. Musters and her chronically gaping curiosity. It would have been simple torture to him in his present frame of mind to hear the Clutterbuck family brought under discussion. He could not have made the very smallest pretence of speaking of them in a casual and indifferent manner, as if they were anybody else. He could not even have discussed Jim calmly, or heard him jeered at as a "pickle," an epithet very commonly applied to him in the 193rd. Even the most insignificant members of the Sleima household had a halo about them for Amphlett Jones, and were in a manner sacred, for sake of the sweet rose that bloomed in their midst.

"No, thank you—no, I thank you," he said, hurriedly, to the doctor as the two stood at the foot of the white stone stairway; "it's not exactly that kind of thing I called, you see in fact, the truth is"

"Ah, yes—yes," replied the doctor, promptly, leading the way into his own particular den, a bright, snug little room to the left, "I understand, been a bit too much out in the sun—slight feverish symptoms—my dear sir, it's the way with all visitors to this island, I do assure you; they will be so imprudent."

"You are wrong again," said Mr. Jones, resting his hand with its one shining jewel a moment on the doctor's shoulder, "wrong again; at fault, in fact, in your diagnosis—that's the proper professional way to put it, is it not? I never was in the enjoyment of better health in my life—never. The slight tendency to what my good friend Dodson called 'tizzikyness,' and my medical man called incipient bronchitis, completely disappeared before I had been in Malta a week. No, no, it is not that sort of thing at all—though I may say that, if it had been, I should have come to you with all the readiness possible."

"You might, indeed," said the doctor, thoughtfully stroking the heavy, sweeping moustache that many a subaltern envied him, and that seemed to be a sort of compensation on the part of nature for the bald spot we wot of—"you might, indeed."

"The fact is," began Mr. Jones, and then his voice grew a bit husky.

He had not realised before what a very difficult thing it is to question a medical man, even ever so delicately, about a man who is his patient and his friend.

"I have been deeply troubled," he began again, making a fresh start, as it were, "to hear of the illness of our friend, the Major."

"Oh, yes," said Dr. Musters, in a casual sort of a way, much as if the said Major had almost escaped his recollection; "oh, yes, too much sun—slight feverish symptoms, quite so; these things will occur in a climate like ours."

Mr. Jones thought there was certainly a depressing monotony in the ailments of the people of the Island of Malta.

"They told me," he said, hesitating and conscious of an accession of heat and colour, as though a sudden glow had reached him from the mellow evening outside, "that you were going to stay all night with them. I have been full of fears, full of forebodings. I did not like to go over again to-day for fear of intruding."

"Quite wise, quite wise," said the doctor. "Not in the way of intruding. I am sure they could never look upon you in that light; never, under any circumstances. But quiet, my dear sir, quiet; nothing so desirable in these cases of slight head symptoms. By the way, did I ever mention our soldiers' evenings to you? I really do wish I could induce you to attend one of them. They are really interesting occasions. Our friend the Honourable Bob now. Can anything be more admirable than his reading of—well—we will say, 'The Shy Man'? I can assure you the men were convulsed; so were we all. It was inimitable. Made me think, you know, of John Parry, and all that sort of thing."

"I should very much like to hear it," said Mr. Jones. "I had no idea Mr. Dacre came out in that line. But about our other friend. I can assure you, Miss—Miss Mabel seemed to be in the deepest distress. Even little Phil—"

"Just so," said the doctor. "Sensitive girl that, and devoted to the family. As to Phil, phew! The least thing in the world upsets Phil, you know. Well, as I was saying, these soldiers' evenings of ours are really a grand success. Let me see"—thoughtfully stroking the fur of a white Persian cat that lay curled up asleep among the books upon the table—"let me see—it is more than ten years since I

first started them; a good deal more. I had something of a voice at that time; rather fancied my voice, you know"—this with a twinkle of the kindly grey eyes and a roguish smile—"rather fancied it. There was a capital fellow in our regiment in those days, a fellow called Green. He backed me up well, and the thing got started. He recited. Bless my soul! you should have heard him say: 'My name is Norval.' It was grand. He came into a fortune, and left the service; but he never forgets the regiment, not he. Did you happen to notice a gold snuff-box on the mess-table? Something very choice in its way, and not a thing that any one could buy for an old song—not at all."

Mr. Jones was getting a little bewildered. He had come to learn all he could about Major Clutterbuck's illness, and lo! he had drifted into unknown waters he knew not how, and was listening to something about a man called Green, a person he could not possibly be expected to take a vital interest in. He said he would make a point of noticing the gold snuff-box next time he dined with the 193rd; then he admired the Persian cat. Then he took his leave.

"Must you really go?" said the doctor. "Amelia will be sadly disappointed."

Mr. Jones reflected within himself that Amelia's disappointment would be as nothing to his.

A few moments later and the two men were sauntering across the sunlit cornstores en route for the officers' quarters.

Mr. Jones liked to go and visit the youngsters in those droll rooms of theirs, with the bare plaster walls, and the hired sofas, the property of extortionate Jews.

It had turned out that the doctor, too, wanted to run over for a quiet hour in the ante-room—the day being mail day, and the London papers a bait rivalling in attraction even Amelia and Mrs. Crashleigh—so together the two entered the pleasant court, where the fountain whispered in the golden light, and the Honourable Bob, reposing from the onerous duties of the day, leant against the side of an open doorway, smoking the restful cigar. As the knight of old raised his vizor and unclasped his coralet, so the Honourable Bob had unbuttoned his tunic, and perched his shake on to the back of his head. As soon as he saw Mr. Jones he hurried forward with genial smile and greeting.

"Vewy glad to see you; was thinking about you—give you my word; wishing it

wasn't such a sap to get into mufti and stroll down to your hotel."

"Now it is coming," thought Mr. Jones, as his heart gave a heavy thud, and then beat loud and fast; "I shall know all about the troubles at the Clutterbucks."

But in the quiet retreat of the room containing the hired sofa, it was not the troubles of the Clutterbucks on which the Honourable Bob began to expatiate.

"Have you heard about poor old Paling?" said he, solemnly, gazing at Mr. Jones through his hurriedly-focused eyeglass.

"Bless my soul, no," said Mr. Jones, visions of the high drag, the high-stepper, Butcher, the stern-faced groom, and the remains of the unfortunate Baronet, all mingled up in horrible confusion in consequence of a hopeless smash, flashing before his mind's eye. "You alarm me, my dear sir, you really do. What has happened to our unhappy friend?"

"Bowled over; knocked into a cocked hat; never saw such a thing in my life!"

"Did she bolt, or kick over the traces, or what?"

"Bolt! Kick over the traces! My dear fellow, you're awfully mad—don't you know"—this with a superb pity for the other's ignorance—"we are talking of Miss Mabel Graham, and, allow me to tell you, that's not the way——"

"Miss Graham?" said Mr. Jones, in a tone of mingled surprise and awe, while a deep flush overspread his face. "Has there not been a carriage accident of some kind? I took it for granted. I thought it so likely. What has Miss Graham to do with any mischance that may have befallen Sir Peyton Paling?"

The Honourable Bob spoke at once, concisely and to the point.

"Refused him—flat!"

Mr. Jones sat down rather abruptly on the hired sofa.

"Why, you don't mean to say——" he began, but the Honourable Bob interrupted him with the face of a tragic muse.

"Don't tell me," he said, "don't tell me you didn't know that Paling was in a state of waging love for Miss Graham! Why, there isn't a drummer-boy in the 193rd doesn't know it—not even the smallest of them. Any one could see it with half an eye."

"I did not see it with two," said Mr. Jones, humbly. "I have been very blind,

and very stupid; but now I look back. Ah yes, yes, I remember people said so, in fact—I had forgotten. His disappointment must be bitter—bitter indeed."

"Gad!" said the Honourable Bob, screwing his eye-glass into his socket afresh, "I like that; that's warm, true—what d'ye call it, and no mistake. What comes from the heart goes to the heart. That goes to mine. I thank you for my friend Paling. It was a tremendous affair."

"The refusal!" said Mr. Jones, who was most heartily ashamed to be conscious of a little lilted song of joy in his own heart, somewhere very deep down, like the song of a tiny bird in the hidden depths of a wood.

"No; the letter," said the Honourable Bob, solemnly, and making a sign to his servant to keep out of the room for the present, as he was engaged on urgent private affairs, and could not trouble to get into mufti just yet—"the letter making the proposal."

"Oh, he wrote, did he?" put in Mr. Jones, seeing something was expected.

"We all wrote," said the Honourable Bob, with a magnificent air.

Then he took off his shako—which apparently hung on by a hair—laid it on the table, opened his stock more freely, and threw himself back in a chair, and prepared to enter into a full explanation of matters.

"You see, Paling, though the prince of good fellows, is not much of a scribe; in fact, it took three of us—himself, myself, and Ginger—to write that letter. We felt that it must be written. Paling had been over to Sleima sixteen distinct times to propose, and failed to bring his courage to the sticking-point. Neat idea, that; don't exactly know where I got it."

"Shakespeare again," said Mr. Jones, with a nervous smile.

This narration of how hard a thing it was to ask a woman to be your wife, somehow touched him nearly.

"Dear me," said the Honourable Bob, with much complacency, "I must be deuced well read in Shakespeare; didn't know I was, give you my word, till you pointed it out to me. Well, we sat one on each side of him, you know, and each put in a sentence, turn and turn about."

"It must have been a remarkable—I should say a fine—letter," said Mr. Jones.

"Oh, deuced—so full of feeling, you know. But it came to nothing, you see; and Paling's in an awful state—cut to pieces, give you my word."

"I can well imagine it," said Mr. Jones.

Indeed, he could fancy no man in Malta, or out of it, who should stand in such need of pity as the man whom Mabel Graham had refused to marry.

"He's off on leave; can't stand it, you know. I mean seeing her, and all that sort of thing. Going to try Florence for a bit; rather hot at this time of year. But that's nothing, bless you, to Paling; he's a regular salamander. The worst of it is, he had great hopes, because the Major seemed to back him up so."

"Back him up!" said Mr. Jones, faintly, and feeling not a little ashamed of certain peculiarities of the bibulous one rising up before him in rather vivid colours.

"Bless you, yes; made no end of him—let the girl ride his roan cob, Punchinello—borrowed . . . but that's nothing—any fellow would help another fellow in that kind of thing." Here the Honourable Bob pulled himself up suddenly as if with a tight curb, and Mr. Jones said: "Oh, of course," with a rather misty notion of what he was assenting to. Whether it might be Sir Peyton's name to a bill, or his umbrella in a shower of rain, was left an indefinite question, and one that could scarcely be probed into.

"Let's step across and see the poor old fellow," said the Honourable Bob.

So they went.

The Major's quarters were rooms large and lofty—bare enough to the eye of Mr. Jones; but yet with a sort of rude comfort, that was lacking in many others he had seen. There was a paltry glass over the mantelshelf—almost obscured by invitations to Sir Peyton Paling to go and amuse himself in various ways, stuck all round the frame anyhow; from a request that he would dine with His Excellency the Governor on such a night, to a modest little notification from pretty Mrs. Carbonel that she should be "at home" on a certain evening, and purposed to cheer and delight her friends with a little music. For the rest, chairs, sofa, tables were covered with garments and "properties" of every conceivable kind, amongst which the Major's soldier-servant was searching for things to pack in a huge gaping port-manteau, while the stern-faced groom looked on from the inner doorway, and Butcher, with his tail uncurled, and his blunt nose uplifted ready to howl on the least possible pretext, sat between his master's knees. Not the move of an eye-

lash had Butcher for any other creature. Though the stern-faced groom whistled ever so wisely, not an inch would he budge. With that unerring instinct which tells the faithful dog that the master he loves is in trouble, Butcher knew that things were going badly with Sir Peyton Paling, Bart., Major in Her Majesty's 193rd Regiment of Foot. Every now and then a small piece of roseleaf-red tongue showed itself through the brindled muzzle, a hint that, if it would be any comfort, Butcher was more than ready to lick his master's hand. Meanwhile, with a brandy and-soda on one hand, and Ginger—quite long drawn out with sympathy—on the other, Sir Peyton dress'd his weird.

It was a sad weird, for the bibulous one had set a true and tender heart on Mabel Graham.

"Ah, Mr. Jones," he said, lifting a lack-lustre eye to that gentleman's sympathetic countenance, "I am glad to see you—I always have been glad to see you ever since the first day of our acquaintance. I have f-f-fallen upon sad days, Mr. Jones, had all my young hopes blighted, as you may say. I adored that girl, sir; I loved the ground she walked upon, as they say in the library books. . . . I would have d-d-done anything—I was prepared to do anything for her family—she's devoted to those boys you know; and I knew you'd got to take 'em along with the sweetest and best of girls. She's all my fancy painted her, she's lovely, she's divine—"

"I am sure of that," said Mr. Jones.

"But she's not for me, Butcher, old dog, she's not for me—"

He laid his shaking hand on the dog's massive head and gazed into the goggle eyes that were shining with tears.

Butcher, feeling himself appealed to, could contain his feelings no longer; he pressed his head up against his master's breast and uttered a prolonged howl.

"Who's to take care on the dawg, sir, me or Mr. Dacre?" said the stern-faced groom, who had disappeared into an inner room soon after Mr. Jones's arrival, but now showed once more his close-clipped head and uncompromising features; "who is he to bide with, sir, while you are away?"

Sir Peyton's mood changed on the instant. He drained the brandy and-soda to the last drop, gave a rapid twinkling wink at the others, and stretched himself back to have his laugh out. At this,

Butcher, fancying the state of things must have improved, gave a short, satisfied bark, and, clambering up in a lumbering sort of fashion, licked his master's nose, and had to be reproved for the same.

"He's a rum 'un that is," said Sir Peyton, under his breath, with a slight jerk of the head towards the door. "He's as jealous of the old dog as a man is of his mistress. Butcher, old boy, will you stay with Davenport and be a good dog till I come again!"

But Butcher would not look at Davenport, nor at any one. His mind misgave him at the bustle and confusion that reigned in the room. It meant packing, and packing meant going. The old dog knew that by bitter experience. He was not going to take his eyes off his master till he couldn't help himself, not he! And so they left him, and left Sir Peyton to see to his packing, for he was to start early next day.

Mr. Jones took a cordial leave of him. In spite of his—it may be said one, and only one—falling, he thoroughly liked the man.

"One can well understand his feelings," said the Honourable Bob at parting by the courtyard archway, "his aspirations, his longings:

Something to love him, something to bless,
Something to smile upon and to caress.

That's about it; give you my word."

"It is one of the sweetest feelings of our fallen nature," said Ginger, solemnly.

Then the two sauntered back to their quarters to dress for mess.

Mr. Jones betook himself back to Valetta. It was strange how keen a fellow-feeling he had for Sir Peyton. During all the time of that lamentable interview he had felt as one small boy, who is going to be caned, feels while another small boy is being caned. The state of mind in question can be summed up in a very few words:

"It will be my turn next."

Sir Peyton might love Mabel Graham dearly; he might worship the ground she walked on; nobody wished to dispute the matter in any of its varied phases; but he, Amphlett Jones, would yield to none in the power, and passion, and strength of his own love for her—of his readiness to do and to be all that she wished to herself and to those whom she held so dear.

Probably he should bring upon himself the same fate as that sad one which had overtaken Sir Peyton. What matter if he

did! It was a better fate, in his estimation, to love and lose Mabel Graham, than to love and win another woman.

It was to live upon a higher plane, to attain to a more "liberal education."

The curtain of the dusk falls suddenly in those latitudes; it is not drawn, it is dropped across the sky, and all at once night reigns, and the starshine is softly shimmering overhead.

By the time Mr. Jones reached his hotel, this sudden change had taken place. The street was full of people, passing to and fro, laughing, chatting, rejoicing in the coolness after the heat of the day.

How merry they all looked, thought Mr. Jones, how contented with the world and with themselves!

And there was Michael, watching at the hotel door, his face appearing round the door-post all one broad, broad grin, the whisk of the white napkin clearing the air like a bird's wing.

He seemed ready to dance a fandango round Mr. Jones; he spluttered as he spoke, so excited was he.

"The plenty splendid signor; the signor plenty grand, plenty fine, waiting upstairs for Sare Jones; waiting plenty long time; ver' glad you will now be to come. I will denounce you quick. I go before."

Up fled Michael, his small, allpurred feet hardly seeming to touch the floor. Up went Mr. Jones, wiping his brow.

"Ah, my friend," said a familiar voice, "you are here at last. I have waited with the patience of Job, and am not to go unrewarded. That is well."

And there, before him, was Major Clutterbuck, somewhat jaded and fagged-looking, and with a hollow kind of smile upon his face; but as usual as neat as a new pin. His dress was a pale suit of mufti, fitting him in that miraculous manner that Mr. Jones had defined some time since as "looking as if the things grew there," all so perfect, yet so easy and natural—and in the buttonhole a flower, wax-white, showing up like a star against the delicate grey.

It was an anguish to Michael to leave that room. Would the "plenty splendid signor" wait so long and so determinedly if there was no reason in it? Why did the family Inglesse from the top storey—"pig-dogs of Inglesse every one, and the bull-beef father, full of bellowings, and

'come here,' and 'go there,' and 'no, dank you for nothings.' Basta!"—comes down the stairs just as he, Michael, was shutting the door upon those two inside! No chance to kneel softly on the floor, and lay your ear tenderly beside the hole of the key—none!

"You must go downstairs, if you like it, or if you like it not. And then they begin:

"Wait-a! bring this. Wait-a! bring dat.' All the chance is gone; and nevers shall you know what was the madness of Sare Jones, and why the plenty splendid signor wait so long. Ahimé!"

Thus Michael, later, to his friend the waiting-maid of the English lady, who fully recognised the hardships of his position, and wished it was not wrong to wish to marry an olive-skinned Maltese papist, with gold rings in his ears.

In the pangs of Michael's unsatisfied curiosity we too must participate. On us the door that hid those two inside must be closed, even as it was on him. Nearly two hours later, when the silver moonlight flooded every street, and shone upon the placid water like the very radiance of heaven itself, the Major came out from the room, alone.

He looked pale, but his eyes were aglow, and he crooned, as he went slowly down the stairs, the burden of an old song:

Oh, ruddier than the cherry,
Oh, sweeter than the berry.

Then it died away into a tuneful, but inarticulate, murmur; and so, with a quick look up the street, and down the street, the Major went out into the beautiful, shadow-haunted night, a man light-hearted and without a care. He left behind him a man dazed with the sense of a bliss unparalleled, and as unexpected as though it had been a bolt from the blue.

In a church hard by the bells began to jangle, harsh, and out of tone, as it is given only to Maltese bells to be. Perhaps to no other ears than those of the man who stood in the still unlighted room, gazing, as one who dreams, into the soft, sweet radiance beyond, could they have taken the guise of joy-bells.

With ardent soul uplifted beyond this changeful world of ours, the earnest-hearted man prayed for the gift of wisdom, prayed to be wise and tender, loyal and true; and all for a woman's sake.

"For her dear sake! For her dear sake!" he murmured, to the starshine.

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a
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CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 127.—THIRD SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1891.

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By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

DURING the twenty minutes' drive which lay between the Tyrrells' house and the Cornishes', Selma sat just as she first sank back into the cab, perfectly motionless, her colour coming and going in burning flushes, which died away as suddenly as they came, leaving her white face whiter still. She was unconscious of her surroundings, unconscious of any physical existence at all; every sensation seemed to be absorbed in the whirling thoughts which chased one another unceasingly through her brain. She did not even attempt to get out of the cab when it stopped at the house, until the cabman, who stood with his hand on the open door, and the parlourmaid, who had opened the house door, had been waiting some seconds, until, in fact, she was roused by a cheery, impatient call from the hall.

"Selma, Selma, make haste! Have you lost anything?"

She moved then with a start, which seemed to send all the colour back to her cheeks in a vivid, crimson rush, and, without an instant's pause, she jumped out of the cab and rushed up the steps into the cheerful light which streamed from the hall.

"Here I am, Sylvia," she cried to the girl who was waiting to receive her. "Oh, Nettie, it's you! Your voices are all ridiculously alike. Why didn't some of you

vary them? Lost anything? No. What in the world should I have lost? Where are all the others? Did you think I'd run away?"

She had passed her arm through the somewhat surprised Nettie's as she poured out her flood of questions, rapidly, and in a voice pitched rather higher than usual, and was drawing her quickly along the hall when the parlourmaid stopped her.

"Please, miss, is the man paid?"

Selma laughed, and the laughter, which broke from her almost before the words were out of the woman's mouth, was like her voice, high, and not so musical as usual.

"Of course not," she said, taking half-a-crown from her purse. "Give him that, Mary, please."

"Roger has been in ever so long," said Nettie. "He's been dreadfully rampant; but Humphrey's just taken him off to dress. You must make lots of haste, Selma, or you'll be late. You do look as if you'd enjoyed yourself."

"Of course I have," cried Selma, lightly. "I've enjoyed myself madly, Nettie. Oh, girls," as Sylvia and Helen came out of the drawing-room at the sound of their voices, "isn't this shocking? Come up, all of you, while I get ready, and tell me all you've done!"

"You've got a headache, Selma," said Helen, quickly, struck by something in her sister's rapid utterance, and putting her hand gently on her shoulder to turn her round to the light. But Selma shook her hand off with another laugh.

"What a libel, Helen," she said. "I'm quite exuberant with health and spirits, and longing to hear about everything. Come along." And she ran swiftly upstairs, turning round, however, at every step, to

make sure that they followed her, the brilliant colour still on her cheeks, her eyes shining.

Sylvia had a great deal to say on the subject of the afternoon's shopping, about which she was much excited, and Selma, while she changed her dress with rapid, feverish fingers, kept up a constant torrent of words, comments, jokes, and questions, which she hardly gave the others an instant to answer, so that they never got beyond the one subject, and Helen and Sylvia neither asked nor received any details of Selma's afternoon. With all her apparent haste, however, the dinner-bell had rung before she declared herself ready.

For an instant, as she went into the dining-room, every drop of blood seemed to leave her face, and her burning hands turned as cold as ice. Then her cheeks were more brilliant than ever again, and she took her place at Roger's side with a burlesqued appeal for pardon to Mr. and Mrs. Cornish, which passed into a rapid string of regrets and explanation addressed exclusively to Roger. He was the least exacting of lovers in spite of all the encouragement she had given him. All he received from her was a wonderful gift, in his eyes, to be thankful for, not to encroach upon, and her quick, eager words more than appeased him.

"It's all right, darling," he said, in a low voice, intended only for her ears. "Everything you do is right to me, always."

The smile, which was her only response, seemed to flash across her face without even touching her eyes, and leaving no impression on her excited features. He was rather disappointed that she did not answer him in the same tone, but turned hastily to Mrs. Cornish, and exclaimed:

"What good success you've had this afternoon, auntie! Isn't it delightful?"

Mrs. Cornish smiled, but before she could answer, her husband struck in with:

"What success have you had, Roger? Let's hear about this house? Is it a suitable abode of bliss for Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cornish?"

Selma laughed, a laugh that made Humphrey, who sat opposite her, lift his eyes suddenly to her face, with a look in them which was not surprise. He watched her quietly, unnoticed, as Mr. Cornish's words drew the attention of every one at the table to her and to Roger as they sat side by side.

"I don't know about that, father," answered Roger, with a proud smile at Selma. "It would have to be a jolly house to be good enough for Mrs. Roger Cornish. But this is a very good average specimen, if she'll put up with it," and he looked at her for a moment with another smile.

The vivid colour became a brilliant spot of crimson on either cheek-bone, her eyes sparkled and glittered brighter and brighter, and a wild spirit of caricature seemed to enter into her as Roger went on to describe in glowing colours the house which he had seen. Every detail he gave drew from her some extravagantly ridiculous comment or illustration. He said the dining-room was small, and she cried that they would have to take dinner on alternate days. He said the drawing-room was large, and she drew a picture of future receptions to be held there, for which the Albert Hall would have been inadequate. She persisted in considering the subject solely from the absurdly farcical point of view, and she carried the whole party with her amid shrieks of laughter.

And, once started, it seemed impossible to her to stop. All through the evening she laughed and talked faster and faster, the crimson patches on her cheek growing more and more burning, her eyes growing more feverishly beautiful. The younger Cornishes were wild with delight; Mrs. Cornish only thought that she was—not unnaturally—a little over-excited with the definite prospect of her wedding-day; and the fun grew fast and furious, until, at last, Helen, quite tired out with laughter, took her sister resolutely by the shoulders and held her fast.

"Ridiculous child, be quiet," she said. "It's quite time you let everybody go to bed. Say good night to Roger, like a good girl, and come."

With another of those strange, high laughs, Selma made her a low curtsy, and, dancing up to Roger, did the same before him.

"Good night to Roger, like a good girl," she said. "Now, Helen, if you're in such a hurry, quick, quick! Quick! Oh, Helen!"

She had dragged her sister outside the drawing-room door before the last words came, a strangled, gasping cry, and Helen, with one look at her working face, drew her swiftly upstairs and into their own room—just in time.

High spirits and violent reaction were no novelty with Selma, and it was cha-

characteristic of Helen's devotion to her sister that emotions, which she would have tolerated in no other human being, became to her, in Selma, only factors in that "way" of hers, which, considered as a whole, made her so infinitely superior to the rest of the world—factors in no wise to be comprehended, but to be taken as a matter of course, and dealt with with a tenderness and patience which no comprehension could have increased.

The hysterical passion of sobs and tears which left her sister still and exhausted that night, simply led Helen to the conclusion that Selma had been "doing too much." The white face and heavy sunken eyes, with which Selma rose next morning, confirmed her in the opinion, and she administered a little sensible elder-sisterly lecture on the advisability of taking things easily—such as she had often administered before. On this occasion, however, her words had, apparently, not the faintest effect, even though they were supplemented by a motherly sermon from Mrs. Cornish.

The days went on—wedding clothes, wedding presents, wedding festivities became the only topics of conversation; and the opinion gained ground in the Cornish household that Selma was making herself ill. Her spirits and temper were alike utterly unreliable: at one moment she would not hear a word of the wedding preparations; at another, she would talk feverishly of her wedding dress. Elsie confided to Sylvia a piteous tale of how Selma had sent her to nurse "all quickly," when she had talked of being "Woger's" bridesmaid. Nettle, coming suddenly upon her standing alone in the room gazing out of the window, caught a glimpse of a face which frightened her, and of which she never spoke to any one, while she seemed to herself to be always trying to forget it.

Of Roger's experiences of her in those days no details were either asked or volunteered. He grew a little silent and depressed, and once, during a long silent smoke with Humphrey, he said suddenly:

"Why is there such a fuss about a wedding?"

Of which enigma, Humphrey—in the act of relighting his pipe, which had gone out as he sat watching Roger's brown study—attempted no solution, only shaking his head in silence. And Roger, relapsing into speechlessness, proceeded to perfect in his own mind a theory, which he was gradually evolving, a theory, namely, that it

was one of the inevitable adjuncts to wedding preparations that the bride-elect should now avoid her future husband as though his presence was unendurable to her, now become irritated, almost beyond control, by every word he said; and, again, cling to him with passionate fervour of devotion.

It was "rough on the fellow," it seemed to Roger; but if girls were like that there was no help for it, and the fellow in question must simply "hold on and wait till it was over."

A month went by, and, in the early days of December, the sending out of invitations to the wedding began to be talked of; and then the conviction began to force itself on Mrs. Cornish that a more inconvenient time than the first week in January could hardly have been chosen. The Cornishes, like most large families, whereof the greater part returns rampant from school for the Christmas holidays, "kept Christmas" extensively; and the more Mrs. Cornish thought of it, the more impossible it seemed to her that the wedding should take place on the second of January.

"I'm very sorry about it," she said to Sylvia and Helen, "especially as Selma insists on exciting herself so. The sooner it is all over the better for her, I'm sure. But the boys must have their Christmas as usual. We are none of us superstitious, fortunately, and it must be on the ninth instead of the second."

They were standing round the fire in the morning-room, where many feminine consultations were held, and, as Mrs. Cornish spoke, the door opened, and Selma came in, moving at once restlessly and listlessly. She was thinner than she had been a month ago; there was no colour in her face as she opened the door, though it flushed feverishly an instant later; and her eyes were larger and strained-looking. She started at Mrs. Cornish's last words, and, coming nearer to the group in the fire-light—it was half-past four, but the lamps had not yet been brought in—she said, with an undercurrent of something which was almost fear beneath the surface lightness of her tone:

"What must be on the ninth, auntie?"

The three conspirators had not heard the door open, and they turned simultaneously at the sound of her voice, looking quite guilty.

"Should you be very vexed with me,

dear, if I told you we were talking of the wedding?" said Mrs. Cornish.

"Do you mean that you want it put off?"

Her tone was so strange that they all looked at her with one accord. She had not come up to them, but was standing by herself near a chair, twisting a fold of the chair-back slowly and absently in her fingers.

"My dear, you surely would not mind it's being put off for a week," said Mrs. Cornish, strengthened in her conviction that the day fixed upon was impossible by what she considered very unaccommodating reluctance on Selma's part to the change proposed. "You see the second is most inconvenient because of Christmas; besides, I think you will be glad of more time, too."

"Auntie, please don't; please, please don't put it off."

The voice was quick and uncertain, and Selma's fingers moved faster and faster. Mrs. Cornish's conviction that the ninth it must be, became a certainty.

"My dear Selma," she exclaimed, "be reasonable! It is a very small check in all the unbroken happiness you have had since September, and I do not think it is considerate of you to take it in this way."

"Oh, auntie!" But Selma stopped herself suddenly. She dropped the chair-back she held, and stood for a moment perfectly still. Then she said, in a voice as strangely dead as her previous tones had been alive with eager pleading, "I beg your pardon! Of course it is—when you like," and went straight out of the room, leaving the three, more than ever convinced that the sooner it was over the better, to discuss the wedding guests.

Selma meanwhile had gone straight to her own room, and there was something desperate in her face, and in her dry, burning eyes. Without a glance at anything about her she seated herself at the writing-table, and began to write a letter, writing rapidly at first with set, white lips, which suddenly began to twitch and quiver until the sheet, as she finished it, was wet with wild tears. Then she laid her head down on her arm, rocking herself to and fro in a passion of misery which was none the less pathetic in its loneliness, because it was almost childish in its unreserve. It wore itself out at last, and, after a long stillness, she lifted her head, and put the letter into an envelope which she addressed to John Tyrrell. It did not go to the post with

the family letters that night, and Selma's cheeks flushed hotly as she stopped at a pillar-box the next morning, on her way with Nettie to do some of the shopping which seemed to have become her one business in life.

There was no letter directed in Tyrrell's handwriting by the next morning's post, nor by any of the posts for which Selma watched during the next three days so anxiously that her cousins accused her of an insatiable craving for wedding presents. There came a little note from Miss Tyrrell enclosing places for the first night of the new piece; but Selma had an engagement with Roger for that evening, and nobody was in the least surprised that she protested feverishly against breaking it.

Then there came a morning—it was the morning of the day on which the piece in which she would have made her first appearance was to be produced—when, trying to rise from the breakfast-table with her letters clutched tight in her hand, and a laughing retort on her lips to Jim, home for the holidays, who was announcing to all whom it might or might not concern, that Selma hadn't eaten a bit of breakfast, she turned suddenly faint, and had to be taken back to her bed, where she begged to be left alone, and in the dark. Before very long, however, she was begging feverishly to be allowed to get up again.

In the Christmas bustle of the next fortnight she ceased to be the centre of interest in the house, and even Helen thought less about her than usual. And as the Christmas preparations supplanted the wedding preparations for the moment in the Cornishes' minds, Roger became convinced that his theory as to the inadvisability of "wedding fuss" was a grand discovery, the announcement of which would make him a benefactor to all lovers to come.

With the lull in the incessant talk about the wedding, there seemed to come a lull in Selma's intense excitability. She was less variable, less passionate, quieter than she had been for weeks, and the Christmas season for Roger was a season of measureless content.

It was his first Christmas "at home" for so many years, and he entered into all the regulation festivities, all the businesses which were pleasures, and the pleasures which were businesses, with a hearty freshness of zest which a blasé young brother described as "a treat." He was Sylvia's

right hand in the decoration of the house ; he presided over snap-dragon ; he organised a riotous distribution of presents by a most orthodox Father Christmas ; he was in request with every one, and his enjoyment was the delight of the whole house. But "jolly" as he found every hour in every day, the perfect hour was the quiet one—the hour when Selma would come softly to him in the fire-light, and sit in silence with his arm round her, with something clinging in the clasp of her hands and her face half hidden on his shoulder.

Christmas-day and Boxing-day came and went, and on the morning of the twenty-seventh Selma, coming down to breakfast the last of the party, was saluted by a chorus which she had not heard for more than a fortnight.

"Here she is at last!"—supplemented from various parts of the table by exclamations of: "Oh, Selma, here's such a wedding present!"

"Oh, Selma, Uncle Robert's sent you—"

"No; let Roger tell!"—a dropping fire brought to a conclusion by Jim with the words: "Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cornish! Oh what a lark!"

The Uncle Robert referred to was the uncle with whom Roger had gone out to New Zealand, to whom particulars of the engagement had been written both by the much elated lover himself, and by his mother. Roger had risen as Selma came in, and, coming up to her, he put into her hand an open letter.

"Read it, darling," he said; "he is a dear old boy, and no mistake. Why, how cold you are! Come and sit down."

Selma's face had changed slightly and indescribably in the few seconds which had gone since she opened the dining-room door, and the few words with which she answered him were low and vague; she sat down mechanically in the chair near the fire from which he summarily ejected Jim, and opened the letter. It was short, but very kindly, and it brought to Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cornish, with the sender's love to them both, a wedding present of five hundred pounds.

Short as it was it took Selma a long time to read, and when she lifted her eyes at last to Roger the indefinable expression in them had grown stronger, and they were almost wild with it.

"It is very kind," she murmured; and then above the babel of voices which had risen round her as she read, all talking,

with interest suddenly revived by the letter, of the wedding, Nettie's voice was heard announcing excitedly: "There isn't a fortnight, now. Oh isn't it close!"

"Isn't it close!"

The childish voice rang in Selma's ears, and came between her and everything else that was said during breakfast, came between her and her own voice, her own thoughts even. It rang in her ears all the morning, over all the talk about trousseaux and furniture that went on about her, it rang in her ears during the hilarious lunch, at which Mervyn Dallas assisted, and half an hour later Nettie, coming suddenly out of the school-room, met her running swiftly and noiselessly downstairs dressed for walking.

"Why, Selma, where are you going? It's such a nasty day!"

"I—I'm going for a little walk, Nettie. Look, dear," catching hold of the girl with insistent, appealing fingers; "don't tell any one, but my head is going round so with—with settling so much. It isn't raining now; and I—I want some air dreadfully, Nettie."

There was something almost confiding in her tone, as if she spoke under an unbearable weight of loneliness, and the instinct was strong upon her to touch such childish, uncomprehending sympathy as the unconscious Nettie could give her. But before Nettie could answer, her mood had changed, and she ran down the stairs. In another moment she was in the street.

It was a dreary afternoon, as Nettie had said, and it was more dreary still an hour later, when Humphrey Cornish, on his way home, overtook, about two miles from the house, a familiar figure, on which his eyes had been fixed with much surprise since its outlines first became distinct to him.

"Selma!" he said, slackening his pace as he reached her—she was walking very slowly, "this is a bad afternoon for you to be out."

She started at his voice, and lifted to him a white face, from which the two large, dark, startled eyes looked out with a terrible struggle and despair in their depths.

"My head ached," she said.

"It is no better, I'm afraid. Shall we not have a cab?"

But she stopped him eagerly.

"No," she said. "Please, Humphrey, I—I should like to walk with you."

They went on side by side in perfect

silence, and Humphrey, glancing from time to time at her face as she walked on mechanically, gazing straight before her, thought more than once, as he had thought several times during the last month, that he must speak to her, that he must see if something could not help her. But, intensely sympathetic as he was, his sympathy was apt to be of the mute order, not expressing itself readily in words; and he had too low an estimate of the power of man to help his fellow man by speech. Naturally shy and reserved, convinced of nothing more strongly than of the mutual incomprehension in which humanity struggles, he held that men and women were better left alone to work out their destiny by their own struggles, and the perceptions those struggles brought them.

They were at the bottom of their own long road, when Selma said abruptly, not turning her head towards him:

"Humphrey, a woman may be an artist when she's married!"

He watched her closely, and his face was very grave and pitiful.

"Yes," he said.

"I might—I might go on—afterwards!"

Her voice quivered pitifully, and there was a ring of sickening suspense in it. They were nearing their own door, and he answered, promptly and earnestly:

"Selma, do not think of it. It is impossible. A married woman may be an artist, it is true, but, except in rare instances, she cannot be a great artist and—a good wife. To a woman who marries at the very outset of her career, such a combination is supremely impossible. Believe me, in choosing the latter part, you must deliberately relinquish the former, or you will be miserable yourself, and you will make—your husband—miserable!"

They reached their door as he finished, very gently and kindly, and he paused for a moment, half hoping she would say more, half distrusting his own power to help her if she did. But no word came from her. Only her face was, if possible, whiter than before, and her mouth and eyes were strangely set.

He opened the door with a latch-key, and at the same moment Sylvia came out of the drawing-room, shutting the door behind her.

"I saw you come up the steps, Selma," she said. "I'm so glad! Miss Tyrrell is

in the drawing-room, dear; I've just left her alone to come and tell you."

"Miss Tyrrell!"

The set despair in Selma's face suddenly broke up, and disappeared before a wild, instantaneous leap of hope in her eyes. She moved quickly past Sylvia and Roger into the drawing-room, and then stopped short. A friend actually before us in the flesh, unconscious of our emotions of the moment, differs sometimes painfully from the same friend in our imagination, endowed with knowledge of, and sympathy for our pain.

"Dear girl," said Miss Tyrrell, with graceful enthusiasm, as Selma came slowly towards her. "How very fortunate! I should have been most grieved to miss you."

"I should have been grieved," echoed Selma, vaguely.

She was standing in the full light of the lamp, and Miss Tyrrell looked at her with an expression of disapprobation.

"My dear," she said, "you are not looking at all yourself. Have you been ill? Happiness does not agree with you, I'm afraid."

Then her own words seemed to suggest a new idea to her, and the disapproving expression became an expression of lively interest as Selma said, hurriedly:

"I—I am very well, thank. How good of you to come on such a day!"

"John was anxious that I should defy conventionality and bring you our little present in person, and I compromised the matter by bringing it to the door, and handing it over to your maid for delivery later on," said Miss Tyrrell, suavely. "The wedding-day is close at hand now, is it not?"

There was a sudden, stifled cry of irrepressible misery, and Selma had broken down at last. Her face was hidden in her hands, and she was crying helplessly.

"What shall I do?" she sobbed. "What shall I do? What shall I do?"

If there was one thing in which Miss Tyrrell delighted more than another, it was a scene, and she rose to the occasion with promptitude and despatch.

"I knew it," she cried, triumphantly; "I knew it directly I saw you. My poor, dear child, come back with me, and let us talk it over together. Come to me for a week, at least, and we will help you. You will come?"

"Come!" Selma lifted her tear-stained

face, and clasped her hands together. "Oh, I only want to get away somewhere to be quiet, and think, and not hear about—— There's only a fortnight——only a fortnight! Oh, Miss Tyrrell, will you take me? Will you really take me away and let me understand? I think I shall go mad here!"

She dried her eyes with feverish energy, and in the same manner, as though her every nerve was braced in one desire to escape from the house, she found Mrs. Cornish, and told her of the invitation. Mrs. Cornish, who was not without anxieties as to the effect so much excitement was having on her, was only too glad that she should have a few days' rest before the climax came, though she would rather that the invitation should have come from any other quarter; and, in five minutes' time, Selma was standing with Helen in the hall, with Miss Tyrrell waiting for her in the carriage.

"Don't stay long, dear," said Helen, lovingly, "and rest well. What a pity Roger is out! What shall I tell him from you?"

Selma threw her arms round her sister's neck.

"Tell him that I love him!" she whispered, passionately. "Nell, Nell, tell him that I love him!"

"Selma!" called Miss Tyrrell. And Selma ran down the steps, into the carriage, and was driven away.

"THOROUGH."

THE idea that the character is a fixed, unalterable quantity is likely to be for most of us a very uncomfortable one. And yet not a few people of eminence have held it. Carlyle was one of them. He once said that he was so convinced of it that if he had his own way he would put all rogues in a bag and drown them out of the life they polluted. This is not an estimate of existence which is apt to confer dignity upon it. But, thank goodness, neither is it an estimate we are bound to accept.

Could we accept it, I dare say it would be an inexpressible relief to a good many of us. We should drift from it the very first moment when it presented itself to us as a solemn and certain truth. Impulse and inclination would push us along just whither they would have us go. Of moral sense we should soon have none worth

speaking about. How could it be otherwise? The setting hen that sits serenely upon an egg of chalk, and daily looks to see a chick appear, is a fair parallel with the man who, holding this belief of Carlyle's, yet hoped to see a number of lively and respectable virtues grow forth from the infertile soil of his soul.

Our life would in fact develop into a brutal battle, unredeemed anywhere. Those who were well to the van of the strife, with decorations and medals upon their breasts, could hardly be expected to heed those others who had fallen and lay dying or sorely wounded at their feet. For a fatalism of character would of course imply general predestination. The man who was down was meant to be down. It were a waste of energy to stoop and try to lift him. A shrug of the shoulder and a conventional word or two of pity would be the only tribute from the successful man to the unsuccessful. We should all get into the habit of marching to our fortune or our doom with set, impassive faces, heedless about anything. The fine catalogue of virtues and attributes which pertain to human beings, could be but as the paint and contour of the marionettes on a Neapolitan stage. You do not look to see a shapely marionette clap its hands and exult over its fine figure and lovely complexion. It would be absurd for men and women to prate and brag about their abilities as if they had anything to do with them. The Italian at the wings of the theatre sets his puppets in motion. And so, in like manner, it is to be presumed, we too should be set in motion, to run through a certain course, and then disappear like a battered marionette not worth repairing.

Yes, there can be no doubt about it, the idea is singularly unpleasant and humiliating. I, for my part, wonder how Schopenhauer, to whom it was so congenial that he wrote an essay upon it, could in his old age reconcile his pride with it. The testy old philosopher ought to have had the wit to perceive that other men and women did him no wrong by refusing to bow down and confess him a leader of thought and a great man. It is not the marionettes who profit by the shouts and laughter of the delighted populace; nor are they mentioned in the daily press as being especially deserving of the gratitude and admiration of the diverted world at large. It would be as absurd for one marionette to embrace another marionette, assuring it of its immeasurable superiority over most other

marionettes, as for one mortal to offer compliments or praise to another.

It is much more satisfactory to believe, with the mass of mankind, that we can more than half control our fate. The mere notion is invigorating. It makes us hold up our heads. We would look the sun itself out of countenance if willing would do it. And it gives us that delightful sense of individuality which more than aught else carries us well through the battle of life.

Without this conviction we should have no affection for the thoroughness which has become like a virtue to us. George Eliot somewhere has said that she loves those souls that rush undeviatingly towards the goal they have set before themselves. It is a very natural sentiment. Such souls have clearly chosen the better part. Even though they are not going in the direction that might best benefit them, it is much that they are going somewhere, and are not being driven like a snowflake hither and thither, until they vanish into nothingness before ever having cast anchor.

It is hard for some of us to concentrate adequately upon what may be termed the main pillar of our lives. There is so much to distract us, here, there, and everywhere. It seems so unimportant whether we devote our interests to this subject for half an hour or an hour; whether we let this one opportunity slip, or whether we grasp it. Yet I suppose success depends upon these slighted minutes and slighted opportunities. Your thorough man is never in doubt. A thing is done, or it is not done. He does not waste himself in needless or merely casual vacillation.

One knows well enough how the history of industrial inventions has hinged upon the unswerving devotion of the inventors to their ideas and the tiny details which, in combination, make up their discoveries. They ate and drank with their ideas, sat in solitude with them when the rest of the world was at its pleasures, and at night still communed with them in the visionary land of dreams. And in the end they had their reward. Not necessarily in crisp bank-notes, public recognition, and in becoming irresponsible god-parents to soaps, and neckties, and portmanteaux. But in the consciousness of success—if not for themselves, for others—that warmed their hearts even when the death-chill was upon them.

Money is doubtless much. But to the

man who can live on threepence a day, and be happy, it is less than it is to the majority of us.

So, too, with our literary giants. It is convenient to go to the dead rather than to the living for examples on this count. They exist out of question with us; but how should we know of it!

Balzac in his attic, writing and writing in vain; going into the streets and alums of Paris to study the people of real life in contrast with the people of his manuscripts; and afterwards continuing to write and study his world, until at length he is acknowledged to be a giant among men! There never was a more emphatic illustration than this man of the lengths to which untiring energy, iron will, thoroughness, and perseverance will carry the enterprising mortal. I make bold to say that Balzac was not an extraordinary youth when he disappointed his father's ambitions, and took to a garret instead of the law. But he became extraordinary. And now he is set on a pedestal high above the heads of his contemporaries; and they who get within viewing distance of his statue in the temple of Fame think themselves lucky.

It may seem, from Balzac's and kindred cases, that the thoroughness which drives on so irresistibly towards the goal at which it aims, is much the same as a rare faculty for hoping. Perhaps it is. But there must also be something behind this faculty, or else the subject may, when a septuagenarian, find himself no farther on his way than he was at five-and-twenty.

Still the man who is ever sanguine may on the whole congratulate himself. Do you notice how often the phrase "I hope" occurs in the letters of the younger of us? General Gordon once commented upon the epistle of a correspondent somewhat drily by saying that it contained "five hopes." As if that were too many! Why, my uncle, in receipt of regular scrawls from his dutiful nephews, would be able to produce a handful of letters with ten or a dozen "hopes" in them. The dear boys begin every sentence with a fresh one. They hope the weather has been as fine with him as it has been with them. They hope his left leg has not been as gouty as it was a month ago. They hope all the kittens or puppies the other day born into the world in his stable have not been hurried into eternity by way of the lethal bucket. And so on. If they do not express in black and white the one chief

hope that lives and moves within them, namely, that the dear old gentleman will not forget that they have each a birthday impending, it is not because they esteem it not worth mentioning. They hope the other hopes, expressed, will hint stoutly at this unsignified hope.

Some may think that indifference or even terror will urge a man on as well as his hope. In certain temperaments, it is possible enough. The philosopher who has convinced himself that life and death are all one, and that nothing can disturb his stolid calm, must not be expected to be very enthusiastic in his undertakings. Yet he may lead a forlorn hope as valiantly as a young cornet just gazetted. And on the other hand, it is quite conceivable that the special correspondent who stands watching the mortal escalade of a town, may write down the name of a man for honourable mention whose daring is the result of a keenly-realised knowledge that if he does not go forward just as fast as he can he will have a bayonet in his back.

Lord Brougham was a thorough man if ever there was one. Whatever his hand touched, to that he devoted himself strenuously until the need for him had passed. George the Fourth found this out when the future Chancellor took a brief from his Queen. You would be prone to think that he was a man through and through sanguine and certain of his abilities. Really, it was not so. He was as human as any of us.

"I own," he tells us, "my rule being, before the moment of action, always to prepare for the worst, and in the moment itself to listen to nothing but confidence and hopes. I am always—in every situation—as gloomy while planning as I am resolute in shutting my eyes to the dark side while executing."

This is famous. Moreover, it is a state of mind which will be found very general among men who have made themselves great by their achievements. Giordano, a renowned Italian writer and patriot, in instructing a pupil of whom much was expected how to comport himself, told him he might be very grave and sad at heart, but that it was his bounden duty to maintain a light-hearted exterior. He said farther that this was the temperament of genius—whence mighty performances might proceed.

Thus you see a man may be thorough whether he is constitutionally sanguine or

despondent. The chief thing is to keep moving. The moment the sanguine man seats himself in his arm-chair, and, with his feet on the fender, begins fondly to reckon over to himself the various fine exploits or gains by which he has profited, or is about to profit, he goes down a peg; and the longer he sits, thus flattering himself and his pride, the less likely he is to reach his goal. It is the same with the man who sees threatening shadows on all sides of him. These will never really vex him if he works on in spite of them. But let him put off his armour, and commune for awhile with them; then their chance will come. They may madden him in half an hour, whereas for a year they had failed to do aught but give him a few uneasy presentiments.

This stir and action brings its own reward. If men were oysters, it would be different; we should not then care a button about anything, except the temperature and the great dredger. But having agreed to believe that we are largely what we have made ourselves, and that we may become what we will, self-interest urges us to keep our talents from rusting. And it is the clash of talent with talent in the arena of the world which makes the hum and murmur of life that some of us love so furiously. What matter if one moment we get a fall in a wrestle with a superior? Even while on the ground we realise that our discomfiture has taught us something. Our next opponent is like to find us all the tougher for the tumble.

Thackeray as a moralist is often worth echoing, "Fortune," says Henry Esmond, "good or ill, as I take it, does not change men and women. It but develops their characters. As there are a thousand thoughts lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up the pen to write, so the heart is a secret even to him who has it in his own breast. Who hath not found himself surprised into revenge, or action, or passion, for good or evil, whereof the seeds lay within him, latent and unsuspected, until the occasion called them forth?"

This is trite, perhaps. But so is bread-and-butter. And both are yet so good that one can do with them more than once.

It reminds us that only the thorough man has a chance of becoming himself, and knowing himself. The rest of us are like rose-buds with a canker in them. We unfold our petals in one direction only, and

are patently imperfect. I don't infer, of course, that men with character development broad as the heavens get translated from the rank of mortals in whom error is inherent. Quite otherwise. They are not morally perfect; but even their imperfections have grown to become them so well that we could ill dispense with them.

It would be a fine thing if each one of us had the same power of expansion alike in character and action. When Utopia comes, this privilege may accompany it. For the present I suppose we must be content with the opportunities we get—some more and some less. They are probably more than enough for most of us.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

A LADY'S ASCENT IN A BALLOON.

THE balloon is gorged with gas. The last sack of ballast has been lifted on board. A dozen hands are waiting to slip the knots which hold her to the ground. There is a final handshaking—not without a little headshaking from the prudent ones who consider an ascent in a balloon a risky pleasure for a woman—then I, and the two gentlemen who have kindly consented to indulge my fancy, climb into the small square car where Eugène Godard, senior, is already, so to speak, at the helm.

"Let go all," cries this patriarch of aeronauts. The monster balloon sways to and fro for a moment, as if to ascertain that she is really at liberty. Then we are off. It is a thrilling moment. I clutch a rope of the rigging in preparation for a vertigo, which, however, does not come on; and the next moment I find myself leaning confidently and comfortably over the side of the car, waving an answer to the cheers of the crowd and the shouts of "bon voyage," "au revoir," which follow us as we leap up from the ground, or, rather, as I should say, if I described the exact impression, as the ground falls away and leaves us in mid-air. The upturned faces below grow less and less distinct; the crowd consolidates into a dark mass; we pass above a forest of gables and chimney-pots, and the whole city of Brussels spreads itself out beneath us: its spires and domes strangely foreshortened from this unac-

customed and Asmodean point of view. We look down into Royal gardens, into sordid back-yards, into the network of alleys round the Hôtel de Ville, into the broad lines of the boulevards. The surrounding country stretches out unattractive, flat, monotonous, under the low, chill November sky. Full of satisfaction at this first moment in, I cannot stifle a rising regret that the weather is not clearer; but the choice of a day depended on so many conditions: there is no wind, no prospect of rain—that, it appears, is of primary importance.

What strikes me first and chiefly is the feeling of security which possesses my soul. This, no doubt, arises from the fact that in a balloon one is not aware of any movement: its progress is accompanied by no jar, no friction; we ascend tranquilly and with a perfect equilibrium. The car is just large enough for four people. We each occupy a corner. A few feet above our heads dangles a couple of feet of crumply-looking piping. This is the opening of the vast envelope which contains I should be afraid to say how many cubic feet of gas. It is Eugène Godard's best and biggest balloon, L'Industrie, which is bearing us, ad sidera cœli, only there are no stars, no heavens visible, only the unsympathetic, unbroken, grey November clouds.

All at once, Brussels and its environs become blurred, then vanish. We are enveloped in a dense fog. We look at one another in dismay. Is this what we came to see? The fog is nothing else than those clouds which I had just been mentally execrating. On nearer acquaintance they are even less inviting than at a distance. They rush in long damp coils, like terrified Undines, through the cordage, and fold us round with a chilly opaque veil. Godard throws out a handful of torn paper. In a few seconds it is hovering above us; the damp has increased the weight of the balloon, and the sudden decrease of temperature has contracted the hydrogen. We are falling rapidly; we plunge into daylight again, and see Brussels hastening up to meet us. A despairing thought seizes me. Our long-talked of ascent is a failure; we shall have to make our ignominious return as best we can to the earth, which a few minutes before we quitted so triumphantly. To my ill-informed feminine mind there seems no alternative.

Meanwhile, Godard has been holding a

rapid consultation with my two companions, one of whom is a seasoned aerial traveller. I see a bag of ballast lifted from the bottom of the car and emptied overboard. We shoot up again. Our captain has resolved to take us, if possible, through the clouds, to pierce the November gloom which hides the day beyond; to initiate us into a wondrous world of which he himself—in more than one of his thousands of ascents—has already learnt something; but which, he tells us, is ever new and strange to mortal eyes.

With this hope before us we re-enter the grey veil, and mount slowly and laboriously upward. By degrees the veil becomes thinner and more transparent—it changes from pearly grey to dazzling white—through it we discern a small, pale sun against a background of blue; the blue deepens, the sun grows brighter and more definite; suddenly we leave the last suspicion of haze behind, and emerge into a flood of clear, June sunshine and warmth. The cheerless November sky, the dull, autumnal earth exist no more for us. Much-to-be-envied mortals, we are translated to a region such as that which the poets have pictured round the summit of Olympus, when the gods held high festival there in the good old times. Our first amazed glance crosses an unlimited undulating tract, whose heights are of dazzling gold and white, and whose valleys are full of tender shades of amber and rose.

"See!" cries Godard. "Another balloon!"

We turn our heads in the direction of his hand; for a moment the illusion is complete, then, with a laugh, we recognize our own shadow cast on this glorious brightness and surrounded by a rainbow aureole. We wave our hands, and our phantom selves return fantastic greetings.

We heave long sighs of overpowering contentment, for the purity of the air and the sense of exhilaration it brings are something too great for words. One would climb the highest mountain in vain in search of a parallel. After all, the farthest peak of the Andes is part of the solid, matter-of-fact earth which we tread every day; in this silent, ethereal world, we are absolutely cut off from our native planet.

Between us and the blue vault above there are no vapours; the diameter of the sun, in consequence, is considerably lessened, its colour is whiter, and its heat is almost unbearable. The thermometer

rises ten degrees Celsius; we take off our wraps; the gas dilates rapidly, and as the balloon mounts, the scene below assumes an aspect of beauty too intense and strange for adequate description.

Below us spreads out a billowy ocean of burning pearl, an ocean of whose extent, however, no mariner can form an idea. It is but a circumscribed view which the top of the highest mast affords, compared to that above which we floated at a height of fifteen hundred feet, and which was bounded at an almost imperceptible distance by long bands of rich purple.

"These are mountains!" I exclaim, at which my companions laugh.

"Have I forgotten," they ask, "that we are in a land of unbroken plain?"

Truly, I had; nay, if I had been told that I saw on that vast horizon the Delectable Mountains of Bunyan's vision, I should have received the information without great surprise, so far did we seem to have passed beyond the prosaic limits of probability.

Besides, even Godard himself, with the help of all the charts and instruments we have brought with us, cannot tell in what direction or at what speed we are moving. The undulating clouds below are, themselves, in motion; they change their shapes continually. It is impossible to discern if they are meeting us, or if we are more slowly following their course. This causes the aeronaut a little anxiety. He is, I mean he was*—alas that I should have to say, was—the soul of caution, especially when he had ladies or amateurs on board. His apprehensions are increased by the sound of a shrill whistle known as a siren, and used chiefly by steamboats. It is possible that we have reached the coast, he says, and it may be dangerous to remain at our present elevation without reconnoitring. He has already laid his hand on the cord of the valve, when we persuade him that we are still within hearing of a certain dog which began barking wildly at us as we took our flight into the clouds. His mind is set at rest. Then the question arises: how long have we been up here?

"Ten minutes or so," I reply promptly.

"Three quarters of an hour," we are told.

It is almost inconceivable; where have the minutes flown to? In this measure-

* E. Godard aîné died at Brussels a few months after the ascent described.

less space, time, too, takes different proportions, a different measure. It is as difficult to appreciate as the moments of a dream. It seems to me, indeed, that we ourselves are changed—idealised by the uniqueness of our surroundings. We are dream-personages, wandering in dream-land.

Unfortunately, a November afternoon has but narrow limits; the sun is already nearing my Delectable Mountains on his way to the other side of the world. Our prudent conductor, who knows what emptying, packing, and finding means of transport for a balloon imply, bids us take farewell of the enchanted land.

The inexorable valve is open. Reluctantly L'Industrie begins to sink. We touch the pearly floor again; again we enter the chilly mist. Here we sink rapidly, and in a few seconds the leaden clouds are above us. How triste and commonplace is our return! The chart is lying open to discover our whereabouts, when, to our surprise, we see Brussels looming in the twilight distance. We have only travelled three or four miles, and yet we have been in a world which the fewest of mortals can realise.

For half an hour or so we hover along—papillonner, Godard calls it—above the tree-tops. The country people rush out of their cottages and follow us, prophesying the direst and most unlikely mishaps for us, the poultry cackle, the dogs bark. At last, when our captain descries a convenient spot, he gives the final necessary cautions, the final pull to the valve. The ground rushes up towards us; a tree-top makes a grab at us as we skim through its upper branches. I shut my eyes, and suspend myself, as I am bidden, in the rigging. There is a violent jar; a rebound; another jar; then, finally, the anchor grapples, L'Industrie is moored in the orchard of the burgomaster of Schepdaal.

"Faites sortir, Madame," says Godard.

I scramble up on to the side of the car, and take a flying leap to the earth. The villagers crowd round to examine us and the mighty machine which has brought us hither.

"We thought you were going to knock down the church steeple," they tell us.

So it is all over; we have returned to the dim chilliness of a November evening. We must condescend to refresh ourselves in a village inn, and to wait until the local train will carry us back to Brussels. But

the contrast only heightens our satisfaction. We rejoice to think that we have laid up one of those treasures of memory, which are beyond the reach of moth, rust, or robber; that we have lived through an hour which will for ever remain incomparable among our experiences. And each one of us as we part with the veteran aeronaut, who has been our conductor, might well have said: "Hæc olim meminisse juvabit."

BRITANNIA AT CHELSEA.

IF there is one thing more than another of which we as Englishmen are proud, it is our navy and the deeds of prowess performed by our sailors from the earliest times to the present day—from the defeat of the Armada to the escape of the "Calliope." If there is one thing more than another which every Englishman believes, it is that, should our navy again be called upon for active service, it would still be found, under the altered style of naval warfare, as fit, and the men as willing, as ever.

It is therefore only natural that, when it was announced that a Naval Exhibition was to be organised, the general feeling amongst sightseers should have been one of pleasurable expectation. When the idea was first mooted, Greenwich, with its Hospital and naval pictures and relics, was suggested as the suitable spot, as Chelsea had been for similar reasons the best place for the Military Exhibition. No doubt, from a poetical point of view, Greenwich with its sailor pensioners and its countless naval associations would have been the better place; but at Chelsea the buildings erected for the Military Exhibition were still standing, and, moreover, it was felt that popular enthusiasm would be more easily aroused and kept alive if the show were brought close to its doors. So it was decided that it would be more advantageous, on the whole, if Britannia were to rule the waves at Chelsea rather than at Greenwich, and at Chelsea the Exhibition is accordingly to be found.

Now, we all said, when we heard of the idea, we shall be able to see for ourselves what it is all about; now we shall have brought before our eyes what ships our ancestors fought in, what weapons they used, and how those ships and weapons have been altered and improved until we have arrived at torpedoes, and hundred-

ton guns, and battle-ships—a single one of which would be capable of demolishing a fleet in the olden days. We will see this Exhibition for ourselves, and learn what we can about this mighty fighting force.

In the result it must be confessed that any one who goes with too lofty ideas will be disappointed. Interesting things there are, no doubt, to be seen; but the whole affair seems rather to suggest an ordinary trading show instead of what we perhaps expected it to be—an official exhibition. An example of what I mean is that you may wander through a gallery devoted to, say torpedoes, all exhibited by the various firms who manufacture such instruments of destruction, instead of through a gallery of Government exhibits, showing one form of torpedo as opposed to another, with plenty of attendants about to explain. That will strike most of us as one of the chief faults—the absence of explanation—the result being that we may wander around and go through the Exhibition most conscientiously with our catalogues, and come out eventually knowing not much more about the navy than we did when we went in.

One more complaint I may make about the arrangement of the catalogue, which, in its way, is most admirable and exhaustive. In the Art Galleries the history of the navy is divided into twelve periods; the pictures are on the walls, the relics are, some in cases against the walls, and more in cases in the centre of the galleries. The pictures are numbered consecutively, the relics are numbered consecutively; the result is that the case beneath picture number 251 may contain relics numbered 1,500 or thereabouts. The consequence of this is that two separate tours of the galleries have to be made—one for the pictures and one for the relics—or the leaves of the catalogue have to be continually turned backward and forward. Of course, the ideal arrangement would be to have a description of each article attached to it, and to have the catalogue reduced to a mere guide; but of course this is practically impossible, as the abolition of the accustomed catalogue involves the sacrifice of a very fertile source of profit.

Having thus prepared our minds so that we may not have a too exalted idea of what we are to see, let us go to Chelsea to the Naval Exhibition, and to-day being one of those early summer days which are the more welcome in that they are unexpected,

those weaker vessels who object to being dragged through endless galleries can be sure of enjoyment, if only by sitting in the sun in the gardens and peacefully basking. Such an opportunity in such a climate may not occur again for many a day. As for ourselves we intend to do our duty, and go right through and see all we can.

It is perhaps unintentional on the part of the management, but it most certainly is so arranged that for many people the first exhibits will have the most powerful and thrilling interest. These exhibits are in the Franklin Gallery, and are the Franklin and other Arctic relics, which must appeal to the most unemotional mind. Luckily for the sightseers they are all labelled, so we can wander around them without rustling the leaves of catalogues, and marvel over the fascination which the North-West Passage and the North Pole have always had for our sailors, and deplore the terrible waste of life which is here so forcibly brought home to us. They are not much to look at, these relics, only little odds and ends of things; but they are eloquent of suffering and death, and if they manage to thrill us cold-hearted sightseers of London, think what they must have been to the men of the various search-parties who found them! What are they, these things that told the story of the missing expedition? Fragments of clothing, carpet, towelling, flannel, and canvas; a glass with silver top from a dressing-case; the eye-rim of a telescope; a portion of a watch; pencil-cases; portions of boats; a prayer-book; a Bible; a copy of "The Vicar of Wakefield"; medicine cases; six silver spoons and forks; and lastly, found lying about a skeleton, a black silk neckerchief, fragments of a double-breasted blue cloth waistcoat, a scrap of a coloured cotton shirt, silk-covered buttons of blue cloth great-coat, a small clothes-brush, a horn pocket-comb, a leather pocket-book. These things were found on Beechey Island, at the mouth of the Great Fish River, on King William Island, Point Victory, Back Bay, Cape Felix, and other places whose names tell a sad story of the weary wanderings of the expedition.

In the centre of the gallery is an exhibit representing the sledges used, packed as in actual use, being dragged over the ice, and a tent which looks small for one, but which is in fact an eight-man tent. The figures of the men dragging the sledge are groggy about the knees, as wax-works are apt to be, but they show

something of the difficulties and hardships undergone, with their blue goggles, their tremendously thick clothes, their legs swathed in bands of flannel, their hands gloved and thrust into bags hanging from their shoulders. There they are represented tugging away over the hummocky ice on their weary and almost hopeless journey—an unimaginative good lady standing by us says in a most delighted tone of voice, as if the men were on a pleasant summer outing: "Lor, Mariar, look at that, that's how they go out a-sleighing."

Scattered round the gallery are various pictures representing Arctic regions, play-bills and newspapers which were printed on ships engaged in various Arctic expeditions, and such-like things.

Passing out of the Franklin Gallery we enter the Nelson, and from it the Blake and Benbow Galleries, with their pictures and relics; and here we certainly begin at the beginning of the navy, for we are told that the navy originated in the Cinque Ports, which provided a fleet of fifty-seven ships, liable to military service for fifteen days whenever the King called them out. These vessels, according to the catalogue, were from twenty to forty tons burden, and little more than large boats, partially decked, and rigged with one stout mast and one huge square-sail. But the real standing navy originated with Henry the Eighth, who—again quoting the catalogue—instituted the Trinity House at Deptford, and the Board long known as the Navy Board. And here the catalogue makes a wise remark as to the navy, which applies well to the whole lesson of the Exhibition:

"The painter . . . can show 'the blue flag bearing down on the white,' and can give some idea of the 'hawk-like swoop' in Quiberon Bay; he can show the slow advance and terrible onslaught of the 'Victory' or the 'Royal Sovereign' at Trafalgar . . . but nothing here can show the security, the peace, the wealth which has sprung, in only a less degree, from the everyday actions of everyday men, whose names were scarcely known beyond the walls of the Admiralty; but who were, none the less, the units which made up the grand whole of England's navy, 'the wall and fence of the kingdom.'"

The pictures are rather a miscellaneous collection—some noticeable as works of art, some interesting by reason of their subjects, some unintentionally quaint and comic.

Some of the earliest period—the period of Henry the Eighth—come under the last category, and are beautiful bright-green works, with—no shore to speak of, except perhaps a green lawn running down to the sea; while in one Dover Castle appears as being on a square, moss-covered rock, and not as large as a ship. They were fond of green in those days. In this period, too, are Raleigh, Drake, and Hawkins, and the Spanish Armada. Blake and Monk are the bright particular stars of the next period, without whom these years would be indeed blank. Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel illuminates the third period; and after this the well-known Admirals come so thick and fast that it is impossible to enumerate them all; so, going on to the sixth period, we come to the portraits of Rear-Admiral Richard Kempenfelt, who went down in the unfortunate "Royal George" at Spithead; and of John Jervis, Earl Saint Vincent, who, in 1797, defeated the Spanish fleet in Saint Vincent's Bay. And in this period we first come in touch with Nelson, in a picture representing Lieutenant Horatio Nelson volunteering to board a prize in a gale. Here, too, we have a picture of the death of Captain Cook at Owhyhee, and a portrait of Admiral Hood. The seventh period is devoid of great commanders, though there are the usual amount of battle pieces. In the eighth period we come close to Nelson—Commodore Nelson boarding the Spanish first-rate "San Josef" in the action off Cape Saint Vincent; Rear-Admiral Nelson's conflict with a Spanish launch; victory of Sir Horatio Nelson, K.B., over the French fleet in Aboukir Bay on the first of August, 1798; pictures of the Battle of the Nile. And so we come to the ninth period, which includes the Battle of Trafalgar, the chief picture of which is by Turner. Here are pictures of Nelson leaving England for the last time; of the "Victory" breaking through the enemy's line at Trafalgar; of the death of Nelson; and of various other episodes connected with the fight. After this the pictures as history cease to attract, and are only attractive as showing the gradual growth of the new order of things, winding up with a picture of H.M.S. "Devastation." Besides the battle-scenes which predominate throughout these pictures, are innumerable portraits throughout the various periods.

Passing on to the Benbow Gallery, there are many things to repay inspection,

mostly, or rather entirely, small pictures, all divided as before into the twelve periods. Perhaps the most interesting pictures here are some which show us the naval uniforms of different periods—it might have been as well to have carried out this idea more thoroughly—with a very interesting and amusing collection of small drawings by Rowlandson, Gillray, and Cruikshank.

Returning to the Blake Gallery, we will inspect the plate, which is down the centre of the gallery. The best case is that full of models, lent by the Duke of Edinburgh, of various old-fashioned ships; while those who like contrasts will find much to comment on in the exquisite models of the "Britannia" and the "Victoria," as showing the different types of ships which were in use at the beginning of the Queen's reign, and those which are the outcome of the latest developments. These models were the Jubilee offering of the Royal Navy and Marines to the Queen.

Next we come to the various relics scattered about the Blake and Nelson Galleries. The first that we notice are the charters of the Cinque Ports, musty-looking tomes; various books of the towns which were comprised in the Cinque Ports; and generally things which are charges, estimates, and certificates of the time of the Armada next catch the eye, with a letter from Monk, suggesting "that he humbly conceives the taking of twelve frigots from ye fleete here will be very prejudicial to ye hastening out of ye maine body, and that the twelve frigots joining with those in ye West will not be sufficient to encounter with ye Dutch fleete, and to interrupt them in the way homeward to Holland." Hard by several broadsides of the same period, both Dutch and English; for in those days the Dutch were our chief rivals on the high seas, with Van Tromp to lead them. And so they go on with such-like matters and autographs of more or less interest almost right down to our own times; with copies of the "London Gazette" containing accounts of various victories; with official papers, and almost everything which bears upon the history of the navy; the only drawback being that the exhibits, though looking very well in a catalogue, are very difficult to see properly in a glass case.

Then we come to snuffboxes—can we feel any enthusiasm over snuffboxes?—made from wood of the "Victory," from wood of the "Royal George," from timbers

of the "Bellerophon" and many other ships; snuffboxes which belonged to Nelson; snuffboxes presented by Nelson to other people; in fact, too many snuffboxes.

Then we have swords, both presentation and actual fighting weapons, too many to be numbered, and we come to the conclusion that a good many people must have had more swords than they could possibly know what to do with. Amongst these swords is the one used by Nelson at Trafalgar, while some of the presentation swords are well worth inspection. Then there are, scattered about the galleries, various pieces of sculpture, of which, to us who want to learn about the navy, the most acceptable are such as "Figure of Sailor in Winter Uniform;" "Figure of Sailor in Summer Uniform;" "Man-of-war's-man 'on duty';" "Man-of-war's-man 'off duty.'"

Then, finally, we come to the relics, which contain boxes made out of the timbers of various ships; sticks and canes; ensigns and pennants; shot and pieces of shell; various articles of clothing worn by various Admirals; various designs of uniforms of different periods; and so into the Howe Gallery, to the Victualling and Clothing Departments, where we can see samples of all sorts of things consumed in the navy—tobacco, mustard, pepper, cocoa, biscuits, handkerchiefs. Then we can look our fill on the uniforms of the sailors, the barrels in which the spirits are contained, the bread-tubs, the mess-kegs—all of which things are manufactured in the Government Yards at Deptford, Gosport, or Plymouth. Then we come to various trade exhibits of clothing, tinned meats, filters, and so on, and we cannot help feeling that there is something jarring and incongruous about the commercial element, which is here rather obtrusively thrust upon us.

The Cook Gallery claims our attention next, and contains the Navigation Section. Lanterns of all descriptions are here—flashing, coloured, tricoloured, bewildering in their variety. Here are flags, signal codes, night signals and rockets, red flares, and distress signals. Next come models of various lighthouses, among them the original Eddystone and its three successors; and models of light-ships and exhibits showing the lights used in them. Close by are two most curious exhibits showing the various ocean currents—one showing the Gulf Stream and other currents in the

Atlantic, and the other showing the currents of the Indian Ocean, which are well worth looking at, though it seems to take people a long time to grasp the fact that the currents are caused by air being forced through the little pipes which project all over the model.

Then, after sounding apparatus, compasses, and other appliances connected with navigation, we come to various modes of boat-lowering and life-saving apparatus. Here are boats with automatic detachment, for use when the boat is water-borne; here is one which can be lowered and detached by one man; here are collapsible boats, life-buoys, sea-rafts, and line-throwing guns.

Next we come to the Seppings Gallery, which contains the Model Section, and in the beginning of this gallery are some of the most beautiful models of machinery which it is possible to imagine; small as they are, they give one a wonderful idea of strength, and yet they seem to work as easily as possible. We have triple-expansion engines, oscillating engines, single-screw horizontal trunk engines, single-screw vertical engines; in fact, one can get a very good idea of a ship's machinery here, and fascinating it is to watch these little things work with their regular strokes, as if bent on most important business. From here we reach the ships' models, and these, it must be confessed, are a disappointment. Here is, we are told, an extremely good collection of models of ships from time immemorial. Perhaps so; but what is the use of a collection, however good, if there is no order adhered to, nothing to start from, it may almost be said, no means of comparison? What does strike us is, that when it comes to models, we would rather, for the beauty of the thing, look in this gallery on the models of the various Royal Mail steamers—such as the "Ormuz," the "Austral," and the "Orient"—than upon the war-ships of to-day, which by no stretch of imagination can be called beautiful. But here we have models of war-ships, from the old wooden three-decker to the "Victoria"—by the way, there are two or three "Victorias," but of course the present one is meant—models of unprotected sloops, wood screw sloops, gunboats, unprotected cruisers, troop-ships, surveying vessels, torpedo rams, torpedo gunboats, first-class battle-ships. Of these all that can conscientiously be said is that each is uglier than the other.

One good point about these models is this: in the catalogue a description of the size and armament of each ship is given. So we can get some idea of comparison, and for this purpose the "Victory" and the "Royal Sovereign" may well be taken. The "Victory" was a three-decked line-of-battle ship, of one hundred guns; the heaviest gun was a forty-two pounder; her length was one hundred and eighty-six feet, her breadth fifty-two feet four inches; her tonnage two thousand one hundred and sixty-four tons, and she carried eight hundred and fifty men. The "Royal Sovereign" is a steel twin-screw armour-clad ship, with two barbettes; she carries four sixty-seven ton guns; her length is three hundred and eighty feet; her breadth is seventy-five feet; her displacement, fourteen thousand one hundred and fifty tons, and she carries six hundred and thirty-four men. The contrast is certainly sufficiently striking. The most curious model, perhaps, is that of the "Polyphemus," a torpedo ram. She is a twin-screw vessel of very special type, no other vessel at all resembling her; her gun armament is very small, the heaviest gun being a six-pounder.

From the Seppings Gallery we enter the grounds, and enter the Saint Vincent Gallery, which is devoted to ordnance, from an old gun of Henry the Eighth's time to the big guns of the present day. Curious names they gave their guns in early times—Serpent, Peterara, Saker, Culverin, Sakeret, Falcon, Minion. The first one distinguished by weight is a brass three-pounder gun, dated 1742, which is said to have been made for experiments in quick firing. Then we have guns such as were used on board the "Victory," till we come to ten-inch eighteen-ton guns, introduced in 1868; and further on we get a huge weapon which we are unable in weight to compare with the others, for it is down in the catalogue as a "B L 13.5 inch, introduced in 1887. Full-size model of turret or barrette guns of certain ships of the 'Admiral' class." Perhaps this is an eighty-ton gun; but there is no one to ask for information, so we are unable to find out. Round the sides are destructive-looking guns—Hotchkiss, Gatling, and Nordenfeldt—horribly suggestive of destruction and death-dealing power, and there is a collection of shells, magazines, and various tools necessary to the guns, while old-fashioned muskets find a home on one wall.

Adjoining this gallery is the Armstrong Gallery, where the mode of modern warfare is more practically brought home to us. First going upstairs we find, among many models of ships, such as we have seen in the Seppings Gallery, a most perfect half-model of the "Victoria"—large enough for details to be seen. With torpedo-nets out, guns well visible, anchor properly in position, it is without doubt one of the most beautiful things in the show. Going down again we find a six-inch five-ton gun, mounted on a hydro-pneumatic mounting, which, being translated, is, mounted on a disappearing carriage; and quick-firing guns. Here is a representation of a battery of a modern ironclad, with a gun-room and lieutenants' cabin, and finally we come to the full-sized section of the "Victoria's" turret, in which is mounted a one-hundred-and-ten-ton gun, on hydraulic carriage. This gun fires a projectile of one thousand eight hundred pounds, and takes a powder charge of nine hundred and sixty pounds of powder. A shot from a one-hundred-and-ten-ton gun has penetrated twenty inches composite armour, eight inches iron, twenty feet oak, five feet granite, eleven feet concrete, and six feet brick. Rather a large order; but what is the good if the gun will break down or crack, as it is rather given to do!

Leaving the main buildings now—there is only the Camperdown Gallery unexplored, with its models of torpedoes, and mines, and iron and steel shafting, which may be interesting to professional eyes, but which to the lay mind mean nothing—let us go to the grounds and inspect the various kiosks.

That of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company—it seems rather a mouthful after the customary P. and O.—comes first, with its models of cabins, its photos of Eastern scenes which are well worth seeing, and its models, from the "William Fawcett"—the first P. and O. ship built in 1829, two hundred tons, sixty horse-power—to the "Himalaya," built in 1891, seven thousand tons, and ten thousand horse-power. The models are all on the same scale, so that we can form an idea for ourselves of the relative sizes. The Thames Iron Works and Shipbuilding Company claims us next, and then we turn to the sight of the show—the full-sized model of H.M.S. "Victory," full-sized, that is, excepting as regards masts and sails, of which by the wisdom of the County

Council it has been deprived. We enter by the entry port, pass to the lower deck, and find ourselves with one side of the deck cleared for action, as on the day of Trafalgar, with the guns run out, the boarding-pikes and pistols in readiness, the powder-boxes handy, drinking water for the thirsty gunners—and thirsty work it must have been, too. Among the small pictures in the Benbow Gallery is one representing the working of one of these guns. Surely this might have been with advantage reproduced, and hung up here with the models of the actual guns and their ropes before our eyes; but as this has not been done, we have to imagine it all as best we can. Coming to the other side of the deck we find the living place of the seamen, and an uncommon tight fit it must have been. Guns triced up, hammocks stowed, tables and forms, meat-tubs, grog-tubs—all the living apparatus of a line-of-battle ship of the past is before us. Descending lower still, we come to the cockpit with its waxwork show of the death of Nelson, which, perhaps, might have been left out, but which is, nevertheless, very well done. So we pass out into the open air again, and feel as if we had, at last, seen something real, and something, moreover, really life-size.

Having reached the grounds again, we mean to stop there and enjoy the sunshine, and see what is going on outside. Here is the North Sea trawler, which does not seem to have much accommodation for her crew of four men, when one thinks that each voyage lasts two months. Here, too, is a full-sized model of the Eddystone Lighthouse; but we cannot mount to the top, for the lift which is to convey sight-seers is not yet in working order. We will resist the interior of the iceberg—entrance sixpence—although it is announced outside that the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other members of the Royal Family viewed the interior, and expressed themselves intensely interested with the marvellous faithfulness of the reproduction of the Arctic scenes which it represents. I am not certain of the exact words; but the announcement strikes one as being rather of the catch-penny order. No, we will resist it, and turn to the arena, and see the cutlass and field-gun drill by the blue-jackets from the "Excellent," which is most interesting, the way in which the men play with the guns—again there is no one at hand to tell us what size or weight they are—being

simply marvellous, and very popular with the onlookers. From here we travel to the lake—but the less said about the mimic battle the better. If it is supposed to be exciting, it fails in its object; if it is to be instructive, it can hardly teach anybody anything; and if it is supposed to be a theatrical show, it wants stage-management.

So we will cease sightseeing, and if we don't want some tea we ought to, so we will patronise the German waiters—they are all Germans here; perhaps it is in keeping with the want of officialism, which has been mentioned before—and we will sit down here where we can see that penny-in-the-slot photographic machine, and if we don't get some laughter out of that we had better go home and say we have no risible faculties. Yes, here is actually a machine in which you deposit a penny, at which you look, and which delivers to you a small likeness of yourself—a rival at last to Sam Weller's "profeel maasheen." Some portraits come out pretty well, some don't. Some people look most consummate idiots over the operations, others do not. So, seated and amusing ourselves with their antics, we may consider what we think of the Naval Exhibition, and the conclusion to which we most probably will arrive, is this: We will say to our friends, there is plenty to see if you have patience to find it. If you go with a great idea of what you are going to see, you will be disappointed; while if you go in a moderate frame of mind, and will make up for what is dull in the galleries by the brightness of the grounds, and the music, and the drill, you will not regret your visit.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "Louis Draycott," "Geoffrey Striving," "Aunt Hepy's Foundling," etc.

CHAPTER VII. HAPPY MOMENTS.

If there is one situation more than another in which a woman may be able to forget the sorrow that presses upon her heart, it is when the man she loves is by her side. The tenderness, the help, and the comfort, are so near at hand, that the dark clouds are driven away into the distance. The very touch of her lover's hand seems to say: "Your grief is mine—a burden weighs the lighter, dear, when

there are two to carry it." His sympathy seems to her as boundless as the sea, and refreshing as sweet rills of water in a dry place. Even the sorrow itself, whatever it may be, takes the guise of a cloud with a silver lining, since it has called into existence so precious a comfort.

With Charley Rowan's arm holding her gently to him, with his kisses on her tear-wet eyes, and pale, sad lips, the troubles of the last day or two grew more bearable to Mabel Graham. Indeed, those very troubles had been the immediate cause of the one supreme and intensely happy moment of her young life—the moment in which the love, of which she had been conscious in the very air she breathed for many a month past, was first clothed in the certainty of words, and given into her keeping as a precious gift to be cherished as long as Heaven should give her breath.

It had come about on this wise.

Charley Rowan had called to ask after the Major—not intending to go in at all—but Miss Graham chanced to be coming down the stairs just as he reached the door. Of course, they greeted one another—of course, the tender, honest eyes of the young soldier dwelt with anxious concern upon the sweet face that was now as sad as sweet. Somehow they drifted into the shaded, flower-scented drawing-room over which had come that sudden hush and stillness that sickness ever brings in its train. In the shadowy gloom the girl's face showed white and weary.

"It has been worse than usual this time," she said, her lips trembling as she spoke.

And then, perhaps neither of them quite knew how, she was in her lover's arms, her white face hidden against his shoulder, and he was calling her by all the fond, endearing names love could suggest. It is something for any of us to say that we have been perfectly and flawlessly happy even once in our lives, and it may be safely said that these two, Charley Rowan and his gentle love, were indeed the denizens of an earthly paradise in the first blissful moments of their betrothal.

There had been, for both of them ever since the time when life and fate first brought them face to face, man and maid, destined to love and to be loved, a music in life sweeter than any heard before, a charm in each day and every day—because in each lay the possibility of meeting—a charm new and beautiful. Mabel was not like some rector's daughter

in a dull country parish, isolated from the world of men, and ready to be, or to fancy herself, in love with the first—and perchance only—possible lover that might chance to cross her secluded pathway. Sweet observance and willing service surrounded her like an atmosphere; she could compare one man with another, choose her lover as she would a dress—from among many, and she had said to her own heart that Charley Rowan was the noblest, best, the truest-souled, most chivalrous of them all; most worthy of a woman's devotion, of a life-long love. For Mabel was desperately in earnest in everything she did. She had toiled day by day teaching the weary rudiments of learning to the "scramble," ever since it dawned upon her that in that way could she do good work in the house, and help the little lives a step upwards and onwards.

"Some day," she said to her friend, Mrs. Carbonel, with a hopeful smile, "papa may be able to send them to a good school—and, you know, I should not like them to be looked down upon by the other boys because they were backward for their age."

To this hopeful prophecy Mrs. Carbonel, being wise as well as pretty, made but scant rejoinder. You may look upon a hope expressed as not very likely to be fulfilled, and yet refrain from saying so. Of one thing Mrs. Carbonel was sure—that as Mabel Graham taught her little brothers a, b, c, and two and two make four, she was also teaching herself many ennobling lessons—such as patience and self-forgetfulness—and was, indeed, fitting herself to be, when the hour and the man should come, a noble wife and perfect helpmeet.

Well, it seemed that both hour and man had arrived at last—the hour that was all golden outside, when the lizard slept upon the stone, and the cicada cried all shrilly in the grass, when the sea was scattered with diamond dust, so bright it shone, so merrily it sparkled, when the scent of the datura and the oleander made all the air sweet and languorous—and in a softly-shaded room hands clasped, lips touched, and hearts beat high with passionate content. Charles Edward Rowan, Captain in the Rifle Brigade, was a man upon whose name no slur had ever rested, one who was beloved alike by his comrades-in-arms and by the men under his command. It has been said that dogs are good judges

of character. I grant the point—Butcher, we know, was a clever beast that way. It has been said that children also are good judges in the same line. I accept the statement. Jim was not bad as a discriminator by any means; but, commend me to the private soldier as the superior, or, at all events, the equal of either of these. He weighs in the balance those who are set over him with the nicest discrimination, and finds them wanting, or otherwise. He gives his allegiance, his fealty, his absolute loyalty, where it seems to him that such gifts are due, and his opinion—only you can so seldom hear it expressed—is always well worth having. At all events, it was so in the old time, before the Service was disintegrated by the short enlistment scheme, and when officers and men served together, suffered together, and rejoiced together, year by year, and in many lands and climes. Then was mutual knowledge perfect; maybe now there is no such thing possible. Any way, it was a beautiful thing; and, to come back to where I started from, the men of the battalion to which Captain Rowan belonged—more especially the men of his own company—would have gone through fire and water for him, as the saying goes, and most assuredly followed him under fire with the greatest possible alacrity. Besides this, his brother officers, more especially those of the younger and more unflinching description—knew that if they were in any trouble, a helping hand was ever ready to be stretched out to them, a kindly voice to cheer and encourage.

"It's when a chap's down on his luck that he finds out what stuff Rowan's made of," was a common remark to the newly-joined, who were generally nothing loth to profit by the information.

When all this has been said, I have told enough to those who know their "soldier world," to enable them to take Charley Rowan's measure to the hundredth part of an inch. To those who know nothing about regimental life, and look upon all men who bear Her Majesty's commission, and wear Her Majesty's uniform, as—more or less—"wicked army captains," it is of no use my saying anything. Just as there are people who suppose, and will go on supposing, that a stage career is all champagne and supper, instead of hard work, toilsome drudgery, and plenty of both, so there are people who believe that every event of a soldier's life must needs be of a

—more or less—“risqué” nature, and that the only real value of the man is to stand up straight and be shot at, to prevent the enemy, whoever that may be, from coming to England and shooting down all the good civilians. That good and bad, white sheep, grey sheep, and black sheep mingle in every flock, and that the admixture is approximately the same in all, is a truth that only time and observation, and the study of humanity in the aggregate, teaches any of us. When we have learnt the lesson off by heart, our own race is generally nearing its close, and then life begins to teach the same truth to those who come after us. Neither better nor worse than their neighbours, whose garments are more sombre-hued, the Knights of the Red Cloth, from the very peculiarity of their life and surroundings, are apt, now and then, to evolve very grand specimens of the genus homo—men of the simplest and truest heroism, the most unpretending manliness and rectitude of life, the quickest sympathies, the highest chivalry, and of such men Charley Rowan was one. That a boyish brightness, a ready buoyancy of spirit overlay the deeper depths of his nature, gave him a ready charm. The charm caught you, the reality and earnestness held you.

It was hardly likely that such a man should love, and love in vain. It was hardly likely that a woman could love him in a tepid, half-and-half way. Rather was he one to fill all her heart and life to overflowing, to set her thinking how best she might make him happiest, help him best, be his joy and crown of rejoicing, his veritable alter ego.

This was just how Mabel Graham thought of the matter.

But we are leaving our lovers a long time in that shaded, flower-scented room, where the low, soft murmur of the sea came stealing in through the open jalousie like the crooning song of sweet and restful joy.

Not too long, though, for the telling of those immense nothings, those minute yet all-important details which form so large a part of lovers' talk in all ages and in all climes.

“When did you? Where did you? How did you?” What momentous questions are these! How long a time they take to answer in a thoroughly satisfactory manner! And there is this great difference between men and women: a woman loves to recall and look back upon these first

futterings of the heart. Even when “the grey is mingled with the gold,” when the eyes are grave with thought, when the tale of the years is told, and her sons have to stoop their proud young heads to kiss “little mother”; even then she loves to recall and look back upon the sweet follies, the tender dalliance of the courting days. Not so the man. With him they are past and gone indeed. His love may be strong and faithful, leal and true; but he does not care to try and follow the lead of those sentences that all begin, “Do you remember?” He is apt to say, “Yes, yes, we were very foolish then;” at which the dear heart near his own will sigh, and the dear lips, that have grown a little paler and graver with the long years of home-cares and thoughts for many, will murmur, softly, “Yes, dear; but very, very happy.”

Of course, just now, Charley Rowan was in that rapturous stage where no other thought on earth can find place in the heart of a man save wonder and amazement at the happiness vouchsafed to him.

“I should never have kept silent so long, my darling,” he said; “indeed, I really don't know how I have managed to do so at all—but for my poverty.”

“I would rather have you poor than any other man ever so rich,” said Mabel, with loving daring.

She was not of the milk-and-water order of women, who simper, and put their fingers in their mouths, and say, “Oh la!” when a man gives them a glimpse of the heart that is in him.

Every word he said fell sweetly on her ear; and she let him see that it did. As she was all the world to him, so was he all the world to her; and every look of her soft eyes told him so. She sat beside him on the old couch by the window, and the shadows played upon her white gown, for a glint of sunlight peered in through the green-painted bars. Her lover leaned his elbow on his knee, and looked up into her face.

They made a pretty pair. Well-matched, too—he so manly, she so womanly, both so young and fair to see.

Yet there came a pucker between Captain Rowan's dark brows at her last words; and, after a moment's silence, during which he held her hand very hard indeed, he got up, and began to pace the room, his arms folded, his head bowed down, as though he were walking off some strong emotion.

"Yes, yes," he said, biting his lips in between his words, "I know you would stand by me through everything. I can read your dear heart like an open book—read all the story of perfect trust and perfect love that is written there. But oh, my darling, I have never realised till now the curse of poverty! You want help, not so much for yourself, as for those dear ones whom you love. I know, I know. Do you think I have watched your daily life for nothing all these months? It is very bitter to me, Mabel; it is like the poem—you know the lines—

Is this love to stand,
With no help in my hand?

Nay, I know not if I am right to try and bind you to me. I am afraid I am being very selfish."

Mabel was sitting quite still, with her hands folded in her lap. She was never at any time that unpleasant thing—a restless woman, even in moments of acute feeling; but her eyes spoke, watching him.

How fond, how faithful their soft, compelling gaze!

All at once a little smile dawned at the corners of her lips.

"I am glad you are—selfish. I hope you will always remain so—Charley."

Of course, he was by her side in a moment; of course he threw his arm round her and—

Well, well, there is such a monotony in these things, that it is hardly necessary to go on; suffice it to say that, for a short space, these two forgot the bugbear of poverty, and lingered in the land of happy dreaming.

"Now," said Captain Rowan, at length, "let us be very serious and matter-of-fact for a little while."

Mabel winced, for she knew the subject to which he would fain return.

"You have many troubles and anxieties, dear, for one so young," he said; "many to think for, many—I know—to work for, and I must do all I can to help you. It isn't much, you know, but such as it is it must not fail you."

"Do you call it 'not much'?" she said, in answer; "why, it has seemed to me more than anything else the world could hold—your sympathy, I mean. I have felt as if it lightened half the burden. I have felt like that ever—almost ever since I first knew you."

"My darling," he said, fondly caressing

the hand he held; but he was not going to be lured into a discussion, which might be endless, upon the first days of their first meeting—ah, me, what happy days!—he was going to stick to the point; he was going to be very stern and resolute with this winsome creature who looked upon him as infinitely more valuable than all the wealth of the Indies, with the mines of Golconda thrown in. "This—trouble—with your father, I mean, has been more severe than usual, has it not? Nay"—for she had hidden her face away from him, and he heard her catch her breath quickly—"nay, you must not keep back anything from me now. I have a right—love's sacred right—to share all things with you. Tell me, then, he has—it is—"

After all it was very difficult to put things into words, even with all the sacred right of which he had spoken at his back.

"He has got into more difficulties than usual—much, much worse. I don't quite know what it is all about, but it has something to do with mines, I believe, this time. He was almost delirious all night after getting some letters the other evening. He said all his efforts for us—us, his children, you know—"

"Yes, dear."

"Seemed to be doomed to come to a bad end. It does seem hard on poor papa, doesn't it?"

"Very."

"He told us over and over again he wished he was dead. We dare not leave him a moment. We did not know what might happen. Dr. Musters stayed with us all night. I don't know what we should do without Dr. Musters. He can quiet papa when no one else can. Poor mamma was so good and brave; but she looks, oh, so sad and ill to-day. I made her lie down to rest, and she fell into a heavy sleep. She was asleep when I came down."

Here a wave of rosy colour, visible even in that shadowy room, swept across Mabel's fair face. She caught her lover's arm.

"Charley," she said, "I think I would rather we said nothing about—about us two, you know, just at present. She has been so tried, so upset—most of all about papa, of course, and—about other things."

"About Sir Peyton," said Captain Rowan. "I know; what a time to choose! But I needn't talk, need I? I have not been much better myself, have I? I almost think that it was hearing about Sir

Peyton that brought me here to-day. I said to myself that I only intended to enquire after your father at the door; but I did want to see you, I did, I did, I did! You see, I had fancied that Major Clutterbuck favoured Sir Peyton's suit—many people thought that, Mabel. When I heard that he was definitely refused, I began to think that, perhaps—that it might be your father had divined our secret."

"Oh, no—no, I am sure it is not that. I don't know what it is myself; but it is not that. I was like you—I was afraid papa would be angry; but he took it so sweetly. He was so good and kind. He said, 'My little girl knows her own heart best.' He lay there looking so worn and white. Mamma was putting cooling lotion on his forehead, and she said, 'You need not be afraid, Mab, dear; papa is not angry.' But, Charley"—this with a sudden, searching look into her lover's face—"how did you—or any one—know about it?"

"About Sir Peyton, do you mean?"

He looked somewhat shamefaced as he put the question. He was shuffling, and it did not come easy to him.

"Yes, that I had refused him."

"Well, you see, my dear, I couldn't very well help knowing. He went about telling people, you know, and—crying. He did indeed. He met Mrs. Musters by Calcara Gate, and he told her; he told her he was a blighted being—he did indeed, and then, of course—"

"He must have been mad to do that," said Mabel, with a little toss of the head; "and she, of course, put on her best bonnet—that detestable thing with a pink velvet cabbage over the brim—and called upon everybody she knew!"

"Something very like that I believe."

"I dare say she is saying I have behaved very ill to Sir Peyton?"—this tentatively.

"I dare say she is—and a dozen things besides."

"She is a pestilence!"—this with a little stamp of the high-arched foot upon the Indian matting.

"And one that can't be stamped out—more's the pity," added the Captain; "by the way, Sir Peyton is off to Florence on leave. He rushed about like a madman getting his papers signed, and Saint John is acting the part of bottle-holder. Oh, Mabel mine—you have a great, great deal to answer for!"—this with a rallying, fond smile, and a gentle touch or two to the feathery locks upon her brow.

"It seems so—doesn't it!" she answered. "And I am the more sorry because he has such a kindly heart—such a generous, noble heart, in spite of his little failings—"

"Meaning Sir Peyton?"

"Yes; he told me he would do all he could to help them, for my sake—he said the boys should go to school—"

"Ah, Mabel! he promised to do all that I long to do and can't. If ever I hear any one denouncing wealth, I'll let the daylight into them, never fear—" Then Captain Rowan paid a generous tribute to his rival, for he said: "Good old Paling," at which Mabel laughed a little silvery laugh, the first that had passed her lips since the arrival of those dreadful English letters which had wrought such mischief and desolation.

"It was a strange, wonderful kind of a letter that Sir Peyton sent me—you would almost have thought three or four people had been writing it all together. It was like listening to three or four people speaking at once," she said, the laughter still lingering in her eyes.

"What Mr. Dacre would call a bit jumpy!"

"Yes; just that—quite pathetic in parts, and then—all scrappy; but always kind, you know."

"And your father is really better now!" said Captain Rowan.

"Yes—really."

"And what is going to be done about the—the mine, or whatever it is—and the . . . embarrassments, don't you know?"

"I can't think," said Mabel, looking up piteously into her lover's face. "Papa says something has often turned up when he least expected it; but, then, I doubt if ever things have been as bad before. It is no use trying grandpapa, or even Uncle John again. Last time, they both said they would never do anything more. Oh I wish papa would let things be as they are, and let us just live on our income whatever it is—no matter how poorly—but he says he is so ambitious for us all; he is always trying to make an effort of some sort or other—all for our sakes. . ."

Charley Rowan turned his face away even from the faint, subdued glare that shimmered in through the green shutters. He had heard the Major's little efforts put in such a very different light, you see; and he was conscious of an unpleasant flush that mounted even to his brow.

"You see, Charley," the girl went on, "I have never remembered any other father than Major Clutterbuck; I was too young, when my own father died—and this one has always been so loving to me, not a bit like a step-father. I love him just as dearly as though he were my own father, really—I do, indeed. He has often said when he has come in and seen me teaching the boys, or helping Lilly with her music, that, glad as he should be to be able to afford to send them all to school, he could never feel it possible that they could be in better hands than mine."

Still the Captain kept his eyes from the glimmer of light; neither did he make any reply, save to press anew the hand he had taken in both his own.

What, indeed, can any of us say to the sublime faith given to the faulty, the supreme love that "thinketh no evil"? How can we raise a sacrilegious hand to tear aside the white, unsullied veil, that, like that of the prophet, hides deformity and wrong doing?

"Still, something must be done," said Charley; "things can't go on like this."

"No—that is what mamma says. It would kill papa to have such anxieties always pressing on him; and, if he were to send in his papers, his purchase-money would be of little good—he said it would only be 'a drop in the ocean.'"

Captain Rowan made an uneasy movement.

"Are things as bad as that, my darling?"

"As bad as that. But, you understand, it is only a temporary matter. Papa says what he wants to do is to 'tide over'—yes, that is the word he used—'tide over' a bad place. He says the shares are sure to run up enormously soon, and then all will be well. It seems to me that it is this 'tiding over' that is the difficulty."

"Quite so."

Captain Rowan was gnawing his moustache, and looking at this pretty love of his with a puzzled air.

"He says that if he can't 'tide over,' then it means 'smash.' That sounds awful, doesn't it?"

"Very."

"And I have been afraid that he might ask Mr. Jones, you know, to what he calls 'give him a leg up.'"

"Do you think that is likely after—after—"

"After he saved our precious Phil for us? Well, that is just what mamma and I

feel. Of course, I know papa would do anything for us—put all his scruples in his pocket, you know, for our sakes."

The awful ideas that rushed into Captain Rowan's mind at this, almost made him feel like an hysterical woman. He really was obliged to get up and walk to the other end of the room and back again. But Mabel, all unconscious, went on in quiet earnestness, her innocent, tender eyes following him as he moved.

"Mamma and I would not like Mr. Jones to be asked to do anything."

"Good Heavens! I should think not, indeed!" broke out her listener, and then was ready to bite his tongue out for losing his head.

"Well, that is what I said. Fancy that if it hadn't been for Mr. Jones we should have lost our own King Baby; that the little bed upstairs would have been empty, the voice that is our sweetest music silent for ever! Why, mamma cries even now just to think what it would have been, and when I go and kiss the darling good-night, I always say 'Thank Heaven,' and the others know what I mean, even Phil himself, for he said to me, only the other night, 'You be's welly glad I'm not gone right up above the stars, where you couldn't see me never any more, isn't you, Mabel, dear?' Oh, it won't bear thinking of—what it might have been, I mean."

"Well, don't think of it. Little Phil is safe, you know, dear, and we will always take care of him; you and I."

There was something very sweet to Mabel's ears in that community of interest—that "you and I"—that means so much between a man and a woman.

She nestled her head against her lover's breast, and he kissed her parted lips with the reverent and tender kiss that is the expression of a vow, the acceptance of a sacred trust, the seal of the betrothal, not only of hands, but of hearts and lives.

After a while Mabel raised her head from its dear resting-place, and spoke with some small signs of hesitation.

"Do you know what I did?" she said, shyly. "I asked Mr. Jones to go. I said, 'Why do you not go?' I was so afraid he might want to help us. I thought it would be better if he were out of sight."

"And what did Mr. Jones say?"

"He had no time to say anything. Mrs. Carbonel came in. But he looked scared, you know—got quite pale; yes, really—and shook hands without a word."

"Mabel, has it ever struck you—"

But here Jim came in, looking misty and blurred as to figure in the amber-tinted gloom, his hands in his pockets, as usual, his chin poking forward, also as usual, and his eyes blinking and peering about vaguely.

At last it dawned upon him who were the occupants of the room.

"What are you two doing in here? Is anything happening?" said Jim.

Ah, Jim, Jim! there is a great deal happening in that dusky room—high resolves, high hopes, fond aspirations, hover like angels in the perfumed air; new ties, new vows, new sacred obligations, are binding two hearts close together.

You cannot understand it all, however much you try. Yet a certain awe and fear comes over you, and you creep up to your sister Mabel's side, and slip your thin, gawky arm about her shoulders, looking with pathetic defiance at the man who sits so close to her upon the other side, so that your eyes gleam like a ferret's in the gloom.

Captain Rowan quickly recognises the revolt in the boy's mind. He draws him firmly, yet gently, to him.

"Jim," he says, and his voice is rather husky, and his eyes—if you could see them—rather wet, "there has been something happening. Your sister Mabel"—dear me! how difficult it is to get the words out; all the dust of all the roads in Malta seems to have got into his throat—"your sister Mabel has promised to belong to me—to be my wife. I am going to love her very much, and take care of her always. And I want you—"

"Me and every one of us," corrects Jim, in a rather choky voice, it must be confessed.

"You, and all the rest, of course."

"Oh, I dare say. I like this," says Jim, in a lamentable voice, and pulling down the corners of his mouth. "I do like this—I do. You want to take Mabel from us, that's what you want. Well, it can't be done—not that way. We all go together—indeed we do; we couldn't go to be sep-a-ra-ted"—this was a big word, but Jim got through it bravely—"it would never do—give you my word."

This last sentence comes out with a ludicrous imitation of the Honourable Bob. But it ends in a little strangled sob for all that.

In his earnestness he has come closer and closer to Captain Rowan, until the little

eager hands rest on the shoulders of the white tunic.

"We could never do without her," he says. "Why, Phil has just sent me to say that if she doesn't come this directly minute and sing 'Ba-by Bunting' to him, he'll go up on the roof again, and fright them all like he did last time. Look at that! You really must take us all; there's not so very many of us, if you make us stand close together. We make quite a little bunch—we do, indeed."

What could any one say to a boy like that!

All Mabel did was to cuddle him up close, and change the subject by asking him to keep, as a "safe secret"—this was a bit of family argot—what Captain Rowan had told him.

"Not to tell anybody—not even Algie!"

"No—not even Algie—"

Jim nodded many times, and screwed up his small face into a sort of nut-cracker expression, to indicate the resolute nature of his silence. Then he ran upstairs to tell King Baby that his royal command should be presently obeyed, and songs sung to him, even as he would.

"Let me know how things go on," were Captain Rowan's parting words, as he held Mabel to him, and gave her one long, passionate kiss—"let me feel that you keep nothing from me; your father may be right after all, some unexpected piece of good luck may come about yet, who knows!"

And with those words of hope lingering in her ear, and the thrill of her lover's kiss upon her lips, Mabel went slowly up the stairs, thinking to follow Jim. But at the stair-head she was stopped by her mother, who, pale and wan, came out from a room on the first floor.

"Mabel," she said, in a frightened voice, "do you know where papa can be?"

"Papa!" said the girl, amazed at the question. "Why, in his room, of course."

"The mastare, he go out make plenty walk—Joseppina see him go—with plenty bean-ti-ful flower in his breast—so—"

It was the Maltese nursemaid, Joseppina, who spoke, as she leant over the balustrade of the floor above.

"Are you sure, Joseppina?" said Mabel.

"Plenty sure, Signorina—plenty, plenty sure—the mastare he go, more than one hours ago."

The two—mother and daughter—gazed in each other's face, and in each face dawned a look of fear.

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Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII.

SELMA'S departure produced in the Cornish household a mixed sensation combined in about equal parts of flatness and relief. It was certainly a blow, particularly to the younger members of the family, to have the heroine of the hour transported suddenly from their midst; but there had been an amount of uncertainty attending the simplest conversation with the said heroine which caused them to breathe more freely when she was out of the house, and to look forward to revelling with less restraint in the wedding preparations in her absence.

Roger, coming in that afternoon about half an hour after Selma had gone, took the news very quietly.

"It is much the best thing that could have happened for her, dear boy," said his mother, consolingly, as she "broke it to him," as Sylvia expressed it tragically, the coast having been left clear by the deeply sympathetic girls for the purpose. "She really has been wearing herself out, and I am very glad to think that she will be right away from it all for a few days. I told her that I was sure you would not think her unkind." Mrs. Cornish had not noticed that she had volunteered the opinion, unasked by Selma.

"I should never think her unkind," returned Roger, simply. "I want her to do just what is best for herself in every-

thing. I was afraid she wasn't well this morning, and I was afraid she would get knocked up if the thing went on." There was a ring of real relief and satisfaction in his voice, and his words were followed by an instant's pause before he went on with a hesitating, deprecating shyness which sat oddly on his frank, manly manner: "She went away in a great hurry, you say, mother? Is there—did she—is there any—message?"

Mrs. Cornish laughed.

"I shouldn't be surprised!" she said. "But I'm not secreting it! You'd better ask Helen—she saw her off."

But, in spite of his wistful looks towards the door, Helen was not forthcoming. She and Sylvia, with Mervyn Dallas, who was to dine and sleep at the Cornishes', her father having an engagement at his club, had retired to Helen's bedroom to inspect some of the trousseau frocks which had come home that day, and had not even been unpacked as yet, and to exchange ideas on the subject of trousseaux in general, and Selma's trousseau in particular, over the fire. Sylvia had to go reluctantly away at last, having her hands full of business in holiday time, and she departed with a final verdict on Selma's wedding-dress which was instantly controverted by Mervyn, as she sat on the fenderstool, gazing into space as intently as though the fate of nations hung in the balance.

"I don't agree with Sylvia at all," she said with the greatest earnestness. "I think silk is ever so much better than satin, don't you, Helen?"

Helen assented cordially, and began to fold up and dispose of some of the frocks recently under discussion; Mervyn, shifting her position a little, turned her brown eyes upon the fire, supporting her quaint

little chin upon her hand, and there was a short silence. Then she said in one of the funny little jerks so characteristic of her :

"Are you glad she has gone to Miss Tyrrell's, Helen ?"

"Glad ?" said Helen, with cheery inattention as she contemplated a garment presenting hideous complications to the folder. "Yes, very !"

"Don't you think she looks rather—ill ?"

"She's so dreadfully excitable, poor child," returned Helen, briskly, as she was seized with a bright idea, and attacked her task energetically.

"You do think it's excitement, Helen ?"

"Of course it is !"

Mervyn had spoken her last words anxiously, almost appealingly ; but Helen was far too deeply involved with folds and trimmings to notice her tone of voice, and after another moment she said, half absently :

"Do you remember, Helen, when she said she wouldn't go to the first night of Mr. Tyrrell's new piece—the piece she would have played in you know ? She was so—so odd."

Helen paused a moment as if to recall the occasion, and said :

"Why she was going to that dance with Roger, Mervyn. She was tremendously excited about it !"

"I know," assented the little, uneasy voice. "But she has been like that lots lately—I don't mean that I can say what it was, but somehow I feel—I feel as if—oh, Helen, you do think she's quite happy, don't you ?"

Helen stopped short on her way across the room with the folded dress in her arm, and gazed at Mervyn with the blankest astonishment. The brown eyes were full of tears, and the anxious little voice was quivering, and the next instant Helen had crossed to her with a little laugh, and was turning Mervyn's face to her with a kind, careless touch on the rough, brown head.

"You ridiculous little thing," she said. "What have you taken into your head ? She's as happy as the day is long."

"Suppose—suppose she should be getting sorry to give up acting !"

"Suppose—suppose that she should elope with Jim or with Mr. Tyrrell instead of marrying Roger," said Helen, trying to imitate her tone, and failing lamentably, having no mimetic faculty whatever. "My dear child," she went on, as Mervyn smiled in spite of herself, "my dear child, I do

assure you that one is quite as likely as the other, and that either of the three is about as likely as that she will fly straight to the moon. Don't be a goose, Mervin," she concluded, with a hug. "Come and help me finish these things."

It never occurred to Helen to doubt that she herself, as Selma's sister, must know more about Selma than Selma's devoted slave could possibly do, and she spoke with all the consciousness of superior knowledge ; and even had she doubted on this point, such an idea as that Selma should ever again long for her old work was, indeed, as absolutely inconceivable to her as that she should develop a pair of wings. Life was a very simple business in Helen's eyes, and the complications which people seemed to her to make for themselves by what she called "fancies," were both incomprehensible and reprehensible to her. Mervyn and her "idea" did not come within her sphere of conception at all, and she looked upon them, accordingly, with kindly, good-natured scorn. It was dinner-time before the "things" were finally disposed of ; Selma's message for Humphrey did not seem to the practical and matter-of-fact Helen—even though she was in love herself—to demand immediate delivery, and she let him wait for it until he stopped her on her way out of the dining-room, and drew her rather shyly into the hall.

"Did she leave a message for me ?"

Helen smiled at him, brightly.

"I don't know what you call a message," she said. "She certainly did not give me any news for you ; but she was her own impulsive self over what she did say."

"What did she say, Helen ?"

Helen answered him very softly.

"She told me to tell you that she loves you," she said ; and with another sympathetic smile she turned in answer to a call from Nettie, and went into the drawing-room.

He did not follow her at once, nor did he go back to the dining-room. He wanted to conjure up for himself the tone in which the words had been spoken by Selma, and he betook himself for that purpose to the solitary smoking-room. But imagination was not his strongest point, and he soon passed into distant dreams of future bliss, amid material surroundings much more tangible than so illusive an article as a tone of voice.

There was no letter from Selma the next morning. She had written to him, every

day during his absence at Liverpool, long girlish epistles, full of unrestrained devotion, to which he had responded at great length, and it was, as he expressed it to himself, rather a "pull-up" to find nothing for him in the pile of letters he turned over in such haste before any one else was down.

"What an ass I am! Of course she won't write when we are both in London," he told himself, though why she should not do so he did not define to himself. But when his family appeared gradually upon the scene, he found that every member of it, in his or her own fashion, took it for granted that he had had a letter from Selma, and while he was trying to reconcile their expectations with his previous conclusion, that "no one but an ass" would have expected her to write, the moment for mentioning that he had not heard slipped by, and somehow, after that, he felt an unaccountable reluctance to face the surprise they were bound to express in more or less derisive fashion if he said that she had not written. They had made such fun of the incessant correspondence between London and Liverpool.

There was no letter on the next morning, either, and it seemed to him still more impossible to mention the fact. None arrived during the day, and when the third morning found him still letterless, it occurred to him that Selma might be ill.

He said nothing of his fears; it would "look so rum," he told himself, perplexedly—being quite as unconscious as his family could have been of the motives which lay behind his silence—to announce suddenly that he had allowed them to believe he had heard every day when he had not; and after a low-spirited morning, spent in roaming about London, the simple and straightforward plan of calling at the Tyrrells' house and enquiring presented itself to him, as it would hardly have done to a more complex nature. He did not intend to go in; the element of awe and worship which, mingled with his love, held him back from, as he would have said, "bothering" her.

Such an apparently obvious and direct course of action having presented itself to him, he proceeded, as was natural to him, to carry his thought into immediate effect, and in half an hour's time he was standing on the Tyrrells' doorstep, receiving from the maid an assurance that Miss Malet was quite well.

"Miss Malet is in, sir," added the woman.

"Thanks, it doesn't matter," he said, hurriedly, feeling his unexpressed understanding with himself on the subject of going in losing its force in an alarming way. "I mean I won't come in. Quite well, you say?"

"Quite well, sir. What name shall I say?"

"Oh, you needn't say anything. It doesn't matter. I only wanted to know. Thanks."

He turned on his heel, and went rapidly away, feeling that another moment's temptation would be too much for him, and with a guilty fear, born of his sudden sense of temptation, that Selma might perhaps see him from the window and be "bothered" after all. That is to say he would have called the sensation a fear, though it would have been a delicate business to distinguish it, by the time he reached the top of the street, from a hope.

With the last post that night, at about nine o'clock, his letter came at last. The post was very late. He had given up all hopes for that evening, and he was playing chess with his father, very badly, when Jim, who had intercepted the parlour-maid, pranced into the room, holding both hands behind his back.

"I say, Roger, will you have it now, or wait till you get it?" he called, gleefully. "It's to-morrow morning's come in a hurry, I expect."

Roger had risen abruptly and involuntarily, and he laughed in the inexpressible gladness of his heart as he said:

"Give it up, old fellow."

"Two letters a day isn't fair play," chanted Jim, retreating with his prize; but he found himself seized, and incontinently bereft of it, as Roger said, with another laugh:

"Thanks, Jim. You can get out." And then he turned to his father, and went on, rather incoherently: "I beg your pardon, sir, shall we finish the game?"

"No, my boy," answered Mr. Cornish, rather drily. "On the whole, I think we needn't trouble. We'll try again—when you're married, perhaps."

There was a murmured apology for a moment or two, during which Roger seemed to be afflicted with an undefined desire which led him to wander vaguely about the room. Finally, he strayed in a

casual and aimless way out of the room, passing the open door of the smoking-room, which happened to be empty, and strayed in there. And once there, he opened his letter hastily enough, there being no one to see him, and prepared to devour its contents.

"Come and see me to-morrow afternoon."

"SELMA."

It contained only those seven words; and he had expected such an effusion as she had been in the habit of writing to him at Liverpool. His first feeling was that of a man who comes suddenly against a blank wall, where he has expected to find open country; but when the shock of surprise and disappointment was over, and the meaning of the words themselves grew upon him, his spirits rebounded, and he passed straightway into a seventh heaven of satisfaction. It was not in his nature to analyse the words, to perplex and torture himself by trying to read between the lines. Those seven simple, direct words conveyed to his mind three simple, direct facts—that he was to see Selma the next day; that she wanted to see him as he wanted to see her; that she loved him and trusted him so utterly that the simplest form of words was sufficient in her eyes between herself and him.

He had kept his disappointments and his fears as to Selma's health to himself; but his natural tendency was to perfect openness, and before very long all the family knew that he was to call at the Tyrrells' the next afternoon, he having mentioned the fact to Sylvia—in perhaps not quite such a casual manner as he imagined. But it was not until he and Humphrey were left alone together in the smoking-room that night, that the desire to impart to a fellow-creature the full extent of his beatitude overmastered him. He and Humphrey, half-brothers only, and with few tastes in common, were, nevertheless, strongly attached to one another. Their mutual affection, dating from Roger's early boyhood, had stood firm against twelve years' separation, and the two men looked upon one another to-day just as the two boys had looked upon one another twelve years before; they trusted, respected, and loved one another, oblivious of such superficial matters as diversity of tastes and difference in intellect, and they always liked to be together.

Roger had been smoking in silence for some time, with a radiant expression of countenance which had caused Humphrey

to glance at him more than once, when he said, suddenly:

"By Jove! I was blue this morning."

"What was wrong?" enquired Humphrey, with a slight change of expression, and another quick look at his brother.

"Well, to tell you the truth, old boy," said Roger, confidentially, "I hadn't heard from Selma for three days—not since she went away."

He paused a moment, apparently to refill his pipe, as a matter of fact because he wanted to see how Humphrey would receive the statement. Humphrey made no comment, however; the momentary suspension of his attention to his pipe was too slight to arrest his brother's attention, and Roger went on:

"Of course, I didn't want her to bother to write, but I got it into my head this morning that she might be ill, and I was jolly blue about it."

He laughed cheerily, and lifted the tumbler standing beside him to his lips.

"And you've heard this evening?"

"Yes, old man, I've heard this evening! And I feel, don't you know, as if a thirty-mile walk up hill was about my form to-night—as if I should like to roar a chorus or something of that sort!"

He laughed again, a ringing, boyish laugh, and Humphrey said, slowly:

"It was—a—long letter, then?"

"Well, no; not long! What does one want with words you know? That's the beauty of it! I feel as if she'd spoken to me. 'Come and see me to-morrow afternoon.'"

"Was that all?"

The words came from Humphrey sharply and abruptly, and Roger turned to him, pipe in hand, with another laugh.

"That was all—except—Selma. Takes your breath away at first, doesn't it?" he said; "only at first, though!"

"Only at first," repeated Humphrey, slowly and mechanically. "Of course—only—at first."

There was a long silence. It seemed to Roger that Humphrey might have found something else to say "without hurting himself," and he retired into himself to ruminate delightedly until he was roused by the words, "Does she always write like that?"

Humphrey's pipe had gone out, and he had been leaning forward staring at the fire, apparently thinking deeply and undecidedly. He leant back in his chair,

crossing his legs, as he spoke, and, to a finer ear than Roger's, the excessive carelessness of his tone would have seemed a little unreal. But Roger noticed nothing, though he wished, without knowing why, that Humphrey had not asked the question.

"No," he said, rather slowly, "no, she writes—no, she doesn't. But that's nothing to do with it!"

If the last words were more than half query Humphrey made no reply to them. He looked at his brother and moved as though he meant to speak, and then his intention apparently faded, and he rose and knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

"Good-night, old fellow," he said. "It's getting late."

Roger did not follow him. He sat on in the smoking-room, thinking. The colour seemed suddenly to have gone out of everything; he was vaguely uneasy and disturbed, and he went to his room an hour later dreading he could not say what.

But the impression had no hold upon him the next morning, and when he went into the morning-room about three o'clock to ask, according to order, for a note his mother wished him to take to Selma, he was, in his own estimation, the happiest man on earth. He took the note, and, as he was going out of the room, Sylvia called him back.

"Look," she said, "do you know what this is? It's the wedding-veil. Isn't it beautiful?"

He took the delicate lace fabric between his strong fingers and held it up curiously.

"The veil," he repeated. "It makes that appalling ceremony seem dreadfully real, Sylvia! The veil!" He paused a moment, and laid it down with awkward gentleness. "It isn't half so beautiful as the head," he said, and departed hastily.

There was no one in the Tyrrells' drawing-room when he was shown in. The fire was low, and threw out no glow, and in the general dimness the artistic furniture, and the elaborately unconventional arrangement of the room, struck Roger as being depressing. But he had only an instant in which to consider his surroundings. Almost before the servant could have had time to announce him the door opened with a quick, nervous turn of the handle, and Selma came swiftly into the room.

"My darling!" he cried. "My darling!"

At the first sound of his voice she came to a sudden standstill, shaken from head to foot by a short, sharp shiver, and as he advanced to take her in his arms, her lips parted in a little, hoarse, hardly audible cry.

"The fire," she said, "it's—it's going out," and passing him, hurriedly, she fell on her knees on the hearth-rug, grasping one of the fire-place hangings as she put the embers together with a hand that trembled as if with terrible cold.

Roger stood still in the middle of the room, with a bewildered sense of having been repulsed. What did it matter how many fires went out, he asked himself, when they had not seen one another for four days? He turned towards her, hesitating, wondering, and hurt; and then he told himself that he was a fool, and that she would kiss him in a moment, and he went up to her again, and said, cheerily:

"I've been waiting four days, Selma. Mightn't the fire wait a minute?"

She rose then, slowly, holding to the hangings with clinging, grasping hands, as though to regain from the sense of material stability the mental grip which had so suddenly failed her. He could not see her face, it was bent over the fire, and something in her attitude startled him even more than her extraordinary silence. He put his hand suddenly and entreatingly on her arm; even then his old feeling of worship for her held him instinctively, and he dared not take her unconsenting in his arms.

"Selma," he said, "Selma, what is it?"

She let her face fall forward against the high mantelpiece, and seemed to be almost fighting for breath, as though the rapid beating of her heart were choking her; and then, as he spoke her name again with a sharp ring of deadly fear in his voice, she lifted herself up, and turned her face to him at last. As he saw it he fell back a step, with an inarticulate exclamation of dismay; it was perfectly white, even to the very lips, and her eyes were dark and sunken, with heavy blue shadows round them.

"I—I have something to say to you," she began, speaking hurriedly, and almost thickly. "Don't touch me, and don't—don't look at me, Roger." Her voice broke pathetically, and she stopped a moment.

He turned his face—almost as white as hers under the sunburn—mechanically towards the fire, and she went on :

“Roger—I—there’s nothing will make me less dreadful, I know. I’ve got to tell you. Oh, why didn’t I write it! Why didn’t I write it! Roger, I’ve made a mistake!”

“A mistake,” he echoed, vaguely, and as he lifted his troubled eyes to hers, she covered her face with both her hands. “We must put it right together then, Selma.”

“We must put it right!” she cried, wildly. “Yes, we must put it right while there’s time! But not together, Roger! Oh, Roger, not together!”

“Selma, tell me straight out. What do you mean?”

“I mean that we had better never have seen each other! I mean that you’ve cared about a girl who isn’t worth caring for at all, who wasn’t anything but a fickle child who—forgot! Roger, forget all about me, and fall in love with a nice girl, not like me. I—I’ve made a dreadful mistake. I’ve got to work, to work all my life, and I can’t be your wife, Roger—I mustn’t be any one’s wife, ever!”

She had spoken through sobs and blinding tears, seeing the simple, manly face before her change under her words as under a series of heavy blows, forcing herself on to the end in a sort of fury of compulsion, and as she finished she let her face fall upon her hands again in an agony of tears.

One minute passed, two, three, and still the only sound in the room was the sound of her crying. Then Roger moistened his white lips for the third time, and said, in a low, bewildered voice :

“If you said I wasn’t good enough for you, I should—understand. I can’t understand this. You’ve got to work! Why? Selma, I should work for you all my life. Selma, do you think I shouldn’t make you happy?”

She lifted her head, suddenly, facing him with a glow of enthusiasm dawning for the first time in her dark eyes—the feverish, delusive enthusiasm of an over-sensitive nature over-wrought.

“It isn’t happiness,” she cried, and the light in her eyes grew brighter, and her voice more fervid with every word she uttered. “It isn’t happiness one must think of! It’s what one must do! Oh, don’t you see, don’t you see! I hadn’t any real love to give when I thought I fell

in love with you! I’d given it all away—my heart, and my life, and everything—to my art, and I can never get them back—never. If—if I married you, Roger, I should always know that I had—deserted. There would always be something in my heart that would be more to me than you. I should be miserable—that wouldn’t matter—but you would know it. I couldn’t always keep it down, and I should spoil your life, too!”

“Spoil it, then!” he cried, passionately, coming a step nearer, and catching her hands in his. “It’s yours, Selma! Do as you like with it, only don’t go out of it, don’t go away from me!”

But she drew herself out of his hands, and the glow in her eyes seemed to light up her white face, and absolutely to transfigure it.

With every word she had spoken, overstrained and worked up as she had been when she began, she had apparently transported herself further into a region of exaggerated, exalted self-devotion—the self-devotion of blind, fanatic youth—in which no sacrifice seemed too hard, no suffering too severe; her voice, as she answered him, rang with a passionate intensity of enthusiasm and conviction, which made it, as it made her face, beautiful as it had never been before.

“I must!” she said. “I must!”

He looked at her for a moment—looked at her with a dreadful, uncomprehending agony in his honest blue eyes—and then everything seemed suddenly to swim round with him, and he grasped at a chair for support. He was vaguely conscious that she was begging him to forgive her, to forget her; and then he pulled himself together as, in his simple creed, a man should under a blow, even if it crushed him to the earth as it fell.

“There isn’t anything to forgive,” he said, hoarsely, and with long pauses between the words. “I always knew you were—too good for me.”

He stood another moment, leaning heavily on the chair, and then turned and went across the room, with heavy, stumbling steps, down the stairs, and out of the house.

The front door shut with a heavy thud, and as she heard it, standing motionless, just as he had left her, a little strangled cry broke from Selma’s parted lips. She lifted both hands to her head, as though something there was strained almost beyond endurance. Then she, too, moved

slowly and went away, dragging herself to her own room, to drop still and exhausted on her bed.

The dreary twilight crept into the empty room, the short, December day was ended, and darkness fell.

THE SURREY SIDE.

BANKSIDE TO BERMONDSEY.

AT right angles with the Borough High Street, and behind the great block of railway arches about London Bridge Station, runs Saint Thomas's Street, which takes its name from the old hospital of Saint Thomas, now removed to the river embankment on the south side of Westminster Bridge. The little dingy church of Saint Thomas has been spared, and some handsome, old-fashioned houses, once part of the hospital buildings, now used as railway offices. But on the other side of the way opens the quadrangle of Guy's Hospital, perhaps the noblest institution of the kind in the world.

In the morning before the work of the day has fairly begun, the hospital presents its most cheerful aspect. With the stir of life and expectation, weariness and pain are less felt, and hope attends the physician's morning round. The night-nurses are relieved from their long vigil, and here and there is one who is inhaling a breath of the morning air; a breeze fresh from the Surrey hills is rustling in the tree-tops. Pleasant to tired eyes are the glimpses of green lawns and trees in the freshest robe of spring. Pigeons flutter about the sober, brick court-yards. A pretty nurse in white cap and apron pauses and watches them smilingly as they strut and swagger and sun themselves. And what trays of loaves are coming in for breakfast! A patient at Guy's is surely a privileged being, rather a guest of a grand old foundation, than merely case so-and-so. And should he or she be afflicted with strange or abnormal symptoms—the patient is the subject of interest and attention that is really flattering to the feelings.

Then you reflect that all this beneficent machinery is due to the initiative of a plain business man, a little miserly in his ways, perhaps, but to such good purpose, that happy would be the world were misers of his stamp plentiful.

The column of working men and women

who will presently be marching on, as out-patients to the gates of the hospital, are directed by placards to present themselves by way of Great Maze Pond, and the name excites a little curiosity. Antiquarians say that this name commemorates the former existence of a maze, which formed part of the grounds of the handsome town lodging of the Abbot of Battle, whose dwelling was upon the river bank. Others say that the maze belonged to a house of the Princess Mary Tudor. Whether the Princess charged "twopence for the maze," as is done at Hampton Court, does not appear on the record. At present the neighbourhood would hardly tempt a princess there to take up her abode. But there are pleasant nooks, too, about the hospital. Here is a little old-fashioned street with small houses not without a certain dignity about them, and with windows and steps for brightness and cleanness quite a pattern to the locality, which does not excel in those qualities. And from the door of the narrow-panelled hall of No. 999 issues a young man, bare-headed, save for a great shock of almost flaxen hair, with a great book under his arm; great, but battered and earmarked, such as "Materia Medica" ought to be by a diligent student. And away he goes with great strides towards the hospital; but not without a fervid greeting to the pretty maid who is cleaning the steps lower down, and who doesn't want to listen to his rubbish—but who listens and laughs, nevertheless. The lint white locks, the whiffs of smoke from the big pipe, seem to hang in the air, and attract the sunshine. Other youths equally unconcerned are taking hasty flight towards the hospital.

Out of the maze one comes upon a street, which is only the ghost of a street after all—a dead and buried street, a mere hollow brick archway, with a busy world above it, a world of trains, starting, arriving, and standing still, of booking-offices, resounding passages, and vaulted glassy roofs, filled with a perpetual steam. The street knows nothing of all this; day and night is all the same to it, always with its gas lamps burning, and a kind of darkness visibly hanging about it. Deep subterranean vaults sometimes give issue or entrance to some iron-bound lorry, with great powerful horses, which makes clatter and rumbling enough to wake the seven sleepers; but it has no effect upon Western Street, for its name is posted up there, like a sepulchral inscription. One may journey

a long way in a kind of underground world, busy enough in its dim twilight, with huge waggons and horses, and sacks of meal and malt, with fragrant hop-pockets, and stores of wholesome grain. Passing under the dry arch of London Bridge, there is Bankside, with its memories of the old play-houses and players. Between the Bear Garden—which still bears the same name—and the brewery of Barclay and Perkins, there were four of these summer theatres; the Bear Garden, itself sometimes called the Hope—Excellent Hope, though wild beasts and gladiators did most possess it—the Swan came next, “fallen to decay like a dying swan;” and then the Rose, a name for sweetness; and the famous Globe, “the glory of the Bank,” according to Ben Jonson, who witnessed its destruction by fire on the twenty-ninth of June, 1613—

Which, though it were the fort of the whole parish,
Flank'd with a ditch and forc'd out of a marish,
I saw with two poor chambers taken in,
And raz'd ere thought could urge—this might have
been.

But our way lies in the other direction, where is Tooley Street, crowded with heavy vans, and almost blocked with traffic. The name is a corruption of Saint Olave's Street, and there is Saint Olave's church, where a church has been since the days of Canute. The existing church is, however, eighteenth-century classic, with curious round windows, which peer like so many eyes into the bustling street. If there are any tailors left in Tooley Street to represent the important three of the days of the “Anti-Jacobin,” they don't live at this end, where are great warehouses, which front to important wharves on the river, with a constant turmoil and traffic, with tubs, and casks, and bales of all kinds, and the rattle of steam-cranes and other convincing evidences of the importance of the port of Southwark. Here are egg merchants, and fruit merchants, and potato merchants in active communication with carrier-steamers from the great European ports, discharging cargoes with furious haste, and steaming off by the next tide for fresh supplies. In all this life and movement of the present, who can recall the vision of those old times when the Abbot of Battle dwelt here in quiet seclusion? Yet this Hayes Wharf, whose tall buildings shut out all view of the river, is the very site of the Abbot's dwelling. Mill Lane, which is the next opening, represents Battle

Bridge, a bridge that crossed a small rivulet that emptied itself into the Thames. And Battle Bridge Stairs are still in existence as a testimony that such things were somewhere among this labyrinth of wharves and offices.

A little farther on an opening presents itself, called Stoney Lane, supposed to be the way to the old Roman ferry; a dismal-looking lane, with the ruins of burnt buildings about it, and still not a glimpse of the river, although we know that it flows on the other side of those tall warehouses. But here is Pickle Herring Street, a narrow pass between huge buildings, and here, in a sort of slit between two immense masses of brick-work, we find Pickle Herring Stairs—

On Southwark's coast an ancient port appears,
To market folks well known, called Herring Stairs.

Well known and frequented in other days, perhaps, but at this present as lonely and deserted a spot as any in London; just a place to be murdered in and thrown into the seething tide with not a soul the wiser. The tide is up, and plashing against the slimy stairs—three or four steps, and then a plunge into the whirl of waters. But Pickle Herring Wharf is close at hand, a really fine opening, if you can avoid the casks, and bales, and the huge bundles of hides that are swinging about in all directions. From no other point can you have a nobler view of London on the Thames; the bridge, the Monument, Wren's beautiful spires, Saint Magnus the lofty, the aerial buttresses of Saint Dunstan's, the mass of wharves and buildings from which other spires rise, with the broad façade of the Custom House, and the bastions and battlements of the Tower, its ancient story written on the dark and weathered stones. And with these, you can see the river in its imperial flow, and the movement everywhere of ships and barges; all the lower part of the river is wrapped in a dubious haze, through which show the huge piers and girders of the new Tower Bridge, which is advancing towards completion at a not too rapid pace.

Two dockers, who are taking breath after a spell of hard work, turn their eyes in the same direction, and seem to be simultaneously struck with a certain sense of doubt as to the prospects of the new bridge.

“Us'll be lucky that lives to walk across her. What say you, Chippy?”

For his part, Chippy would like nothing

better than to be provided with free rations of beer till that consummation came to pass. He would seek no further favours at the hand of Fortune. These sentiments, delivered with some emphasis, and garnished with sundry flowers of speech, did not seem to imply any animosity to the new bridge, which, to the ordinary observer, seems to be doing fairly well in the way of progress. Anyhow, the dry arch is finished—a handsome one of granite; and one has the satisfaction of walking under the new Tower Bridge, and may wait with patience for the chance which seemed so enigmatically doubtful to the dockers.

Pickle Herring Street becomes Shad Thames without any distinctive change, except, perhaps, that the footways are narrower, and the roadway is more crowded with vans and heavy waggons. Smart shipping-clerks slip in and out among the wheels grinding against the granite kerbs, and under the horses' heads, whose iron heels are striking forth sparks from the paving-stones; great bales, and sacks, and casks whirl up and down, and frequent little red flags stuck in doorways intimate danger of some kind ahead or aloft. At intervals one comes to an open wharf, whence are to be seen glimpses of the opposite shore, of big steamers wallowing about in the tide, of barges in clusters hanging about the wharves.

Horsley Down suggests the wild heath and open country, but it is just a nest of buildings like the last. And Courage's Brewery, where the congestion of traffic is increased, with big draymen, and huge horses, and drays piled with casks, to say nothing of the firemen in attendance—for there has been something of a flare-up in the neighbourhood, and the fire-hose have flooded the street—Courage's Brewery, it is said, is the site of the old manston of the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem. The church of Saint John is hard by, and proves to be the owner of that curious composition in the way of a spire, consisting of a tall Corinthian column perched upon a kind of dwarf-tower, which is such a conspicuous object from the railway after leaving London Bridge. It is supposed that Shad Thames is a contraction of Saint John at Thames. But the Pickled Herring and the Shad—which is also good pickled—seem to have a natural and proper affinity to each other, which it is a pity to disturb by any such conjectures.

Anyhow, Shad Thames is full of the movement of a solid, substantial trade, with wharves along the river, and great piles of warehouses on either hand, connected overhead with flying wooden bridges; with great corn-mills, and rice-mills exuding white dust from every pore, and tremulous with the whirl of the ponderous mill-stones. With a graceful curve, Shad Thames leads us still among wharves and warehouses to an opening called Dockhead—a place where carmen wait for jobs, and where you can call a waggon and pair of horses, a tilted van, or a great iron-bound lorry, with the same facility as you can a cab in Piccadilly. The dock, of which the head forms this rendezvous of heavy traffic, is called Saint Saviour's, and forms part of the boundary of Southwark. Beyond is Bermondsey, a dim, indefinite region, furrowed with old water-courses, and with the pits of tanners and hide and skin dressers.

This Beormund's Eye, or Island, was once noted for its rich abbey, often the retreat of royal and noble personages. But the abbey has left not a vestige, and is only kept in memory by the name of Abbey Street. After the monks came Protestant refugees, chiefly from Normandy, who had practised the tanning of skins and the dressing of leather time out of mind in and about their old, walled towns on the Norman rivers. We owe the foundation of the English Monarchy, it will be remembered, to the grandson of a tanner of Falaise; and possibly some of his legitimate descendants may have established their pits in Bermondsey when the great Louis drove them from their native seats. Some of these old water-courses still exist, daily filled by the tide, and at other times sweltering in mud.

Beyond, there is Rotherhithe, or Redriff, as it used to be called—a great resort of seamen in the Elizabethan age, and even now not unacquainted with seafaring men, although it is perhaps more in the building and timber trade, and meddles not with shipping, except in the way of barges and hoys. According to recent philologists, the place is the Rytherbythe, or cattle-wharf—a name curiously corresponding with the Lambhythe, or Lambeth, at the other side of the peninsula. It was said that traces of the canal made by Canute—when he besieged London, and took his galleys above the bridge and city by means of an artificial cut—were abundantly evident in the seventeenth century. But the

channel was probably an ancient bed of the river, which the Danish King may have utilised according to the tradition.

It was at Redriff, it may be remembered, that Captain Lemuel Gulliver had his abode, till he was driven away "by the concourse of curious people," who came to question him as to his adventures. But now, what with the river in front, and the Commercial docks at the back, Rotherhithe is as secluded as can be desired. And when the tide is up, and the draw-bridges admit vessels to the docks, it is often cut off altogether from the rest of the world, except by way of the great highway of the Thames.

Beyond Rotherhithe there is no more Surrey-side; for then Kent comes in, and the coast begins, which by river and sea forms the most attractive feature of a voyage down stream and channel.

ON BRITISH ECCENTRICITY.

It is hard for an Englishman to say whether his own countrymen are really more eccentric than other people. He is told they are; but how is he to know that the information may not be built solidly upon prejudice? The saying, "Oh, he's an Englishman," with the shrug of the shoulders that means so much, is often, indeed, commonly put forward abroad when there is talk of the doings of this or that man, whose ways are not like the ways of the herd of mankind. Some Englishmen don't appreciate this sort of thing. They get in a rage with the foreigner who charges them with being of an eccentric race. But, for my part, I always take it as a compliment, bow, and express my obligations, and assure the speaker that I trust he does not intentionally flatter me and the countrymen of whom I am so proud.

On the other hand, however, every one, who has been even but for a few months among the people of the Continent, cannot help coming to the conclusion that we English folk have not the monopoly of eccentricity. What of those palaces and buildings—the outcome of a brain charged with fancy, like the tales of the Arabian Nights—which stupefy us in Bavaria, the work, indeed, of a monarch who was hardly more than half-witted! What, too, of the mechanical tricks of construction which in divers Italian villas astonish the visitor who has

not been forewarned of them? He goes guilelessly upon a certain terrace, for example, where snowy statues seem like to charm his eye, and whence he expects to be able to look forth in romantic peace upon the gardens and orange-groves, and the blue sea beneath and beyond him. Suddenly, however, the statues move, flourish their arms, a cross-fire of cascades from the fountains takes him upon both cheeks, and the balustrading walks away! It is like a bit of "Alice in Wonderland" somewhat modified. What, too, of the crypts in the Capuchin church of Rome and elsewhere in the south, wherein you see the dead bodies of the monks who died ten or twenty years ago standing, dried and ugly, dressed in their brown robes with rosaries pendent from their waists, keeping guard, as it were, over the arabesque of bones with which the walls and ceilings of these dismal vaults are decorated? You are shown the skeleton of a nobleman nailed against the plaster among the other bones, and your guide does not seem to think there is much eccentricity in this form of art.

To turn for a moment to a still stronger form of eccentricity: what of the doings of the Communists only a score of years ago! We odd islanders may be queer, unintelligible fellows; but it would, I hope, take a good deal to make us do such deeds as our French neighbours—under stress of pique, rage, and blind vanity—had no shame in doing.

The truth is, that it is impossible to compare nations as if they were individuals. Each nation has, so to speak, grown up in an atmosphere of its own. When the time of which Mr. Bellamy writes in "Looking Backwards," has actually come, it will be different. Then, I suppose, we shall all be on the same plane, speaking the same language, whether we are in Yorkshire or Patagonia, Chicago or Coneo, and shall all be understood everywhere. But it seems improbable that this convenient state of affairs will come about in our day, or even in that of our grandchildren of the tenth generation yet to live. So, for the present, we must recognise the peculiarities of other people as necessary features of them, and by no means as characteristics meant to excite laughter in the rest of the world. When first I travelled abroad I was much amused by the way the common German eats with his knife. But habit and a measure of experience have toned down

these feelings, until they hardly exist in me. And, nowadays, I am as much at home with the long-haired woodman of a Sardinian forest, in his grimy little hut, as in my own English den among my books and pictures.

Of course I do not mean to imply that it is well for a man to become comparatively indifferent to his own nation. Travel has that effect upon some people, especially when for a term of years they reside abroad, and notably in southern Italy. It eats away their patriotism. They call themselves by that long name—cosmopolitan. They are not, they say, citizens of any one town or country in particular, but of the world at large. This sounds very fine; but if you come to analyse their notions you will, I am afraid, generally discover that, so far from having got their sympathies enlarged to such a degree that they can feel for the central African negro in his degradation, as much as they can feel for the Whitechapel toiler in his semi-starvation, they have rather lost all sympathy for every one except for themselves.

“Cosmopolitan” is, in numbers of instances, only “selfish” writ large.

But to recur to my subject at the outset. It was suggested to me by a visit the other day to Welbeck Abbey, which, as all the world of reading Englishmen knows, is the country seat in Nottinghamshire of the Duke of Portland.

The eccentric features of Welbeck are due to the late Duke. He spent between two and three millions sterling in excavating tunnels under his gardens and parkland, in lighting these tunnels with glazed shafts and gas-fittings, and also in building subterranean rooms, which are not unnaturally called the wonders of Welbeck.

He must have been crazy, not merely eccentric, you will say. But no; that he was not. There is a bust of him in the picture gallery—one of the underground rooms, a hundred and sixty feet long by sixty-four in width—and no man could desire a more cultured and noble head than this of the late Duke. It was a whim, founded, it may be, on personal and physical causes. For years hundreds of workmen were employed on these curious labours. His Grace was much at the mercy of contractors; and even at his death his designs were by no means completed. And the result of this costly burrowing is, that when you visit the Abbey, instead of walking or riding for a

mile or two through some of the finest woodland in England, you suddenly plunge into a tunnel, and have to make the same distance in half darkness, with brick walls on either hand, and brick vaulting some eight or ten feet overhead. It is not a fair exchange for the sunlight, the foliage, and the bird music in the open; but it has the effect of making one very conscious of the eccentricity of at least one Englishman of this century.

It reminds one of Flaubert's advice to young Guy de Maupassant, when this now famous Frenchman was a novice in the field of literature: “You must, my friend, be original. If you have it not in you, you must acquire originality.” For seven years Maupassant took his manuscripts to Flaubert, and received them back. At the end of the time he had, it appeared, acquired enough originality to fit himself for an exhibition to the world.

And yet it is just the French, more than any other people, who assume to taunt us Englishmen for our originality! We must, in future, recast our estimate of this taunt. It is rather a veiled sort of envy, I am disposed to think.

But it is in the conduct of Englishwomen that some fancy our British eccentricity is most markedly shown. How our sisters in ulsters and short skirts are stared at on the Continent! The air with which the distinguished foreign lady looks them over through her long-handled eye-glass is nothing less than delightful. She seems to be thanking Heaven she is not as they are. And yet it often happens that a little later she is fain to confess, with a sigh, that if only her own bringing-up had been half as generous and free as that of the English damsel, she would be a better and happier woman than she is.

It would be hard to find a more typical example of the wayward, strong-natured, and imperious Englishwoman than Lady Hester Stanhope, the niece of William Pitt. She was her uncle's constant companion during the various crises of his government; and it was to her that, after Austerlitz, when he lay on his death-bed, and despair for the western world in its efforts against Bonaparte the conqueror filled his soul, he cried, with that historic cry: “Roll up the map of Europe!”

Well, Pitt died; and Lady Hester's vocation of politician was gone. She went to the East, and there in Palestine she soon gained the veneration, almost, indeed, the worship, of the people. They held

her for a prophetess; and she did not bring the word into disrepute. When Kinglake paid her a visit in the Lebanon, she was sixty years old, with a face "of the most astonishing whiteness." Further, "she wore a very large turban, made seemingly of pale Cashmere shawls, and so disposed as to conceal the hair; her dress, from the chin down to the point at which it was concealed by the drapery on her lap, was a mass of white linen, loosely folding;" and her legs were in loose Eastern trousers. She ruled the villagers on her estate as despotically as a Paasha, and even in old age showed the same strength of will which in her youth had made her famous as a breaker of unruly horses in her natal district of Somersetshire.

I myself am privileged to know a lady who bears many points of resemblance to this Lady Hester. In her younger days she made long riding tours in North Africa, and about the less-frequented countries of Europe. During the wars for Italian independence she was to all intents and purposes one of Garibaldi's staff. She nursed Garibaldi after his Aspromonte wound, was arrested by the Bourbon police, and imprisoned in a Sicilian jail. And so her career went on until she also, like Lady Hester, retired to the East for the declining years of her life. There, in a Turkish island, she lives alone in a villa she has built after her own plan. But though age has dulled her physical powers, she is still so active of mind that the Turkish officials fear her more than half-a-dozen ordinary European diplomatists. She is honest and resolute. When she sees an abuse, she denounces it, and in no half-hearted manner. And here, in this remote island of the Levant, she has astonished the natives by establishing a hospital for sick mules, and horses, and donkeys, which hospital she maintains at her own exclusive cost. In no way has she so adequately proved her eccentricity—so the islanders think—as in this ridiculous regard of hers for the race of burden-bearing quadrupeds. Not so long ago, in her zeal for the protection of animals, she procured for the chief functionary of her island the position of local president of the society which has done so much to ameliorate the condition of suffering horses. The document was sent to her from the Continent, with the name of the notable gentleman inscribed upon it; and with the document was a large silver medal for his honour. But when this

large-hearted lady formally asked him to accept the reputable office, and presented the document and medal, he repulsed them both. He would have nothing to do with such an absurd business.

Once upon a time I, too, came under the banner of British eccentrics. I paid a visit to Crete, another Turkish island by the Levant, and, not finding the hotel of the capital to my mind, with the aid of some kindly intermediaries, I hired a house in the country, and went thither to take up my abode alone. To make matters worse, it was at an epoch when the island was disturbed by revolt. The Turkish regiments were being increased by new levies, and great was the activity on the various military exercising grounds outside Canea and Candia, the two chief towns.

However, nothing serious came of it, and I am free to confess that I enjoyed my unconventional bivouac none the less for the flavour of excitement that this outbreak in the island lent to it.

"How original! Just like an Englishman!" remarked one of the officers of the Austrian ironclads at that time anchored with the international fleet in Suda Bay. Yet, I believe, as a matter of fact, that he and some of his brethren envied me my residence.

It is entertaining to listen to the observations of foreigners upon our national game of football. Here it seems as if our character was objectively epitomised. For a mere piece of leather to risk broken necks, heads, and limbs in so reckless a manner! And yet if herein one does not discover a very direct descendant of the chivalrous craze of the Middle Ages, I doubt if any such descendant may still be said to exist. Our forefathers, several centuries back, do not, to us, seem very wise in their habit of going about fighting with each other on behalf of the black or the blue eyes of their lady-loves. But they did it with the same zest, and probably got as much satisfaction out of it, as our modern fellow-countrymen in the honour of winning their game.

The Briton who has been in Norway or Denmark, and mixed with the Norwegians at home, cannot for the life of him sympathise with the Scandinavian custom of shaking hands violently with one's fellow-guests at dinner, and uttering the words "Thanks for meat," when the meal is ended. It seems a most futile and ridiculous proceeding. Well and good, if

the interchange of courtesies were confined to each guest severally, and his host. But that every individual should engage in a methodical bout of hand-shaking with every one else seems absurd in the extreme. Yet our Scandinavian friends do not feel themselves under any compulsion to justify this long-established custom.

Each man and each nation — within certain bounds—to his and its own taste. On one side of the sea you may be a Royal Highness, and on the other merely Citizen So-and-so. In one town, if you do as your fellow-men do, you will lift your hat when you enter a shop or a café; in another, you will cock it braggartly over your ear, and when you sit down you will lift your legs on to the mantelpiece, and look around with an air of defiance.

The medicine-man of the Choctaws is doubtless a very great personage among the Indians of his own tribe; but if he appeared in Fleet Street, perfumed and bedecked [according to his ideas of full dress, he would meet with more laughter than homage.

I suppose most people could point to men or women of their acquaintance whom they hold in regard as originals or eccentrica. It is somewhat dubious a title for respect, even with us who are reckoned so eccentric a nation. And yet it is worth while to remember that all the great inventions which have done so much for civilisation have been discovered by eccentrics; that is, by men who stepped out of the common groove, men who differed more or less from other men in their habits and ideals.

If we were all cast in the same mould, with characters, aspirations, talents, and features just alike, it might be convenient in some ways. We should at least then be spared the efforts we nowadays have to make to understand the immediate nature and purposes of our fellow men. But, dear me, what a sadly dull place the world would be! It does not need much thought to bring one to the conclusion that, in many respects, the originals or eccentricities of mankind are like leaven to the rest of the world.

In truth, there is more of compliment than abuse in the term "an original" applied to a man or woman. But there must, of course, be a certain amount of ability at the back of the originality. Otherwise the person who is original is like to be dubbed a lunatic by the more undiscerning of his friends, and, if he is

rich, perhaps transported against his will into a sequestered, though licensed, mad-house.

A VERY PECULIAR CASE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

LIKE many people in this world who, in apparent health and in the full possession of all their faculties, have yet, unknown to themselves or anybody else, the germs of some dire disease lurking within them, I was totally ignorant that there was anything the matter with me. I had never been ill since boyhood, consequently had never consulted a doctor. Whether, if I had, he would have discovered my malady before I did, I knew not; but it is doubtful, seeing that it certainly must be a wholly unusual if not unique case, at any rate in the way I found it out for myself. This phase of it alone appears so peculiar and incredible that I conceive it must have opened a new field for speculation amongst the pathologists, psychologists, or whatever the special ologists are who study these matters.

At the time it happened—thirty years ago—I was a bachelor living in a drawing-room communicating by folding-doors with the bedroom behind it, not a hundred miles from the Regent Circus. None of the furniture was my own save one or two easy-chairs, a writing-table, and a rather shabby, dilapidated old bureau or escritoire—a relic of my great-grandfather's, I believe, and preserved by me as representing pretty nearly all the property I ever inherited. It stood in the darkest corner of the sitting-room, though near one of two long French windows. I seldom went to it, using its numerous drawers, pigeon-holes, etc., only as receptacles for old receipts, bills, papers, and a few odd accumulations of no value, which, for some reasons, I did not wish to destroy. The key to its circular top I had, with reprehensible carelessness in such matters, mislaid for weeks. This gave me no concern. I could look for it when I wanted it—that was enough. Other lodgers were in the house, which was kept by a retired butler and his wife, who, with three servants, attended on the inmates.

A young man's life in London, without his being the least unsteady, frequently involves him in late hours when he has a large circle of acquaintances. It was so

with me, especially during one particular season. Operas, theatres, suppers, and dances crowded so thick and fast upon each other that, for nights together, I never had more than three or four hours in bed—always having to be up early. Then, by degrees, when I could turn in in reasonable time, I could not sleep, and, on this account, even the thought of a long night in bed gradually became a terror to me. The fact is, my nervous system was becoming thoroughly unstrung, though at the time I did not know what that meant; certainly I never thought of it as an illness, and, equally certainly, should have scouted any idea of seeking advice about it. I know better now; but let me not anticipate, only, it should be added, that I periodically had some very voluminous and important private correspondence to attend to. By that perversity which frequently seems to regulate these affairs, this often fell out when I was most busy in the day, and when dinners and parties were most numerous in the evening. Never choosing to sacrifice pleasure for business, but always striving to combine the two, I would go at my letters when I came home, however late or tired, if not sleepy. Then, to screw myself up to the work, I would tie a wet towel round my head, stick a pipe in my mouth, and brew myself a cup of strong tea. Thus I often wrote far into the night. As a matter of course, after a bout of this kind, I never went to sleep at all. I rose unrefreshed, fevered, nervous, irritable. A cup of tea and a slice of toast were substituted for the hearty breakfast of yore. I could not eat until luncheon; only towards evening did I feel at all myself, and so late hours became habitual.

In addition, another thing was worrying me greatly. For the past month or more I felt convinced I was being robbed. I did not possess much jewellery, but I was constantly missing certain little trinkets and small articles. Amongst others, a silver match-box, a large crocodile-leather, gold-mounted cigar-case, a pair of gold sleeve-links, a small locket containing some of my mother's and father's hair, a set of studs, a pearl breast-pin, and the like. Also a pocket letter or card-case, which I well knew contained two one-pound Scotch bank-notes—unusual money, not easily forgotten. I felt sure that with every allowance for careless habits, these and many another similar object had vanished in the most unaccountable way.

Search high and low as I would, they were not to be found anywhere in my rooms.

I had lived there nearly two years when this vexation began, and I knew not whom to suspect. It was horribly awkward, and most unpleasant. The landlord and his wife bore unimpeachable characters, and I could never have looked either of them in the face again had I breathed the faintest suspicion of their honesty. Three other men, two of whom I knew slightly, were lodging in the house, as I have said, but as to suspecting them of this petty larceny, the idea was out of the question. No, it must be one of the servants. But which! One of the three was a lad of sixteen. He was a new-comer, truly. The two women were in the house when I took up my quarters there—respectable, "elderly parties."

I did not know what to do for the best. To lock up the rooms was impossible, and even to do the same with all my drawers, writing-table, wardrobe, etc., now, after never having previously turned a key on anything, would be at once to cast a slur on the establishment. Besides, I never could tell exactly when I missed this or that article, because, as I repeat, my careless ways had often led me to imagine that I had lost a thing, when I had merely mislaid it.

Presently the idea occurred to me that I would set a trap. I left a small sovereign purse in a corner drawer of the dressing-table, whence I could declare many trinkets and valuables had been purloined; but there it remained. I shifted it, partially covered it with other things, as if by accident, or as if it had been forgotten. Yet it was always forthcoming whenever I looked. I put a solitary sovereign on a corner of the mantelpiece; the housemaid twice drew my attention to the fact that the coin was still lying there. No, nothing that I ever placed as a bait disappeared. The depredations were confined to such objects as I hadn't been thinking about until I wanted them.

I hesitated, as I have said, to tell my landlord, so I now determined to consult Scotland Yard, for, during the sleepless nights, which as the London season waned grew longer, this subject assumed far greater importance than it did in the day. It became an intolerable nightmare; and I would sometimes get out of bed and search for any object I might suddenly remember I had not seen for a long while.

Sometimes I found it, sometimes I did not; sometimes I never set eyes on it again—it was clean gone. Indeed, at last, it was in this way, and at these untimely hours, that I discovered most of my losses. Thus, what with them and my sleeplessness, I grew quite dejected; but I entirely refused to think myself ill. It absolutely never occurred to me; so I walked down to Scotland Yard and confided my troubles to an Inspector in what is now called the "Criminal Investigation Department." This resulted one Sunday morning in my entertaining at breakfast a certain gentleman named Bunter. An odd-looking person, who had a strange propensity for speering and prying about, and appeared to take a great fancy to the house. It was just the sort of place he wanted.

On this pretext I introduced him to the landlord, with a view possibly of making it worth that individual's while to hand him over the lease. In this way he managed to go all over the establishment, and converse with everybody living in it—everybody except the gentleman who occupied the top storey—the one person I did not know. My friend from Scotland Yard was particularly inquisitive about him since he could not see him, and when I told him that his habits were irregular, coming home very late, and occasionally not going out at all for days, the official looked very grave, finally winked at me, and said he would call again shortly.

But he never had occasion to do so, for it was during the night following the visit of this distinguished guest that I discovered who was the thief, and arrived at the secret of the whole mystery.

The month was August; the nights hot and sultry, and less than ever conducive to sleep. I had nothing to do that evening, and although I turned in early it was with the usual result. The clocks had just struck one, and I had been in bed since eleven without closing my eyes. It was the old story; I was accustomed to it. Suddenly, amidst the host of perplexing and often awe-inspiring thoughts whirling through one's brain under these conditions, I remembered that pocket letter-case containing the two one-pound Scotch bank-notes. Where was it? I had not seen it for weeks! After restlessly striving to drive away the desire to get up and search for it, it mastered me, and out of bed I sprang. For fully an hour I carried on

the quest, but all in vain. Every conceivable and inconceivable corner, drawer, and pocket were ransacked. The key of the escritoire had been mislaid, so I could not examine that; but I knew it contained little else but papers.

At length, entirely exhausted, irritated, and fevered, and with the chamber-candle expiring with a splutter, I flung myself on a couch in the drawing-room. Dawn had not yet broken; but in a few minutes, as I lay there coiled up in my dressing-gown, I unexpectedly fell asleep—a restless, dreaming sleep, full of fantastic, weird-like, indescribable shapes.

When I awoke it was daylight, though the room was still shadowy and obscure, save in one spot close to the long window, where the venetian blind was partially raised—the window nearest that dark corner occupied by the old escritoire. The head of the couch was towards the mantelpiece, but almost facing the door from the landing on the further side of the wall.

At the moment I opened my eyes with a feeling of relief at having just escaped some visionary peril, to my amazement I saw that door slowly open, and the figure of a man stealthily entering by it. It did not make the faintest sound on its hinges, nor did he with his footstep—not so much as the creaking of a plank. The light in that part of the room was far too dim to allow of my seeing what he was like. His face was slightly averted also, and except that the general look of the man seemed to be not altogether unfamiliar, I could not in the least tell who it was. The first impulse, of course, was to sit up and call out, but for some inexplicable reason I restrained it; perhaps because the thought instantly crossed my mind that here was the thief, and upon that I suppose I rapidly concluded to watch him, and pretend to be still sleeping.

However this may be, I did not move as I observed him creep noiselessly across the room to the end of the mantelpiece furthest from that where I was lying. He appeared not to notice me, and after feeling with his hand for a moment between the edge of the looking-glass and the wall by the mantelshelf, he took something away, and instantly crossed back to the window by the escritoire. He passed the little gap of light so quickly into the dark corner that I still failed to recognise him. Then I could dimly make

out that he was apparently unlocking the lumbering piece of old furniture, though still without making the slightest sound.

"Ho! ho!" thought I, "my fine fellow, now I've caught you, have I? You have found the key, and are going to exercise your calling in that direction, eh? Well, there's not much that is worth your attention there; you won't find that a profitable hunting-ground!"

I was not long, you may depend, in coming to a determination. While he was still fumbling at the *escritoire*, I rose, and stealing softly up behind him, suddenly seized him by the back of his collar. He endeavoured to writhe out of my grasp, but I turned him round so quickly that we both staggered, and fell on the floor in a huddled heap together—he undermost! In the fall I struck my forehead severely against something, probably a projecting chair. For the moment the blow seemed to blind me; but as we had rolled over into the gap of light from the window, I had caught sight of his face, turned up as it was towards mine, and I saw—whose face, think you? Why, no other than my own—yes, my very own, as I well knew it in the looking-glass!

That one instant of amazement and consternation in which, as by a flash, I made this recognition, was followed by a total oblivion of all surroundings. The face and figure seemed to fade away beneath me, and to vanish with my consciousness.

How long I lay prostrate, face downwards on the floor, I know not; but in that position I found myself when my bewildered senses slowly returned. For a while, of course, I could remember nothing—how I came there or what had brought me to such a pass. Only very slowly did the circumstances recall themselves. What on earth did they mean? My forehead was unmistakably cut and still bleeding; indeed, there was a patch of congealed blood on the carpet plainly visible in the broad flood of early sunlight now streaming in beneath the half-raised blind. Had I been dreaming? More likely I had had a fit; anyhow, I was so utterly bewildered that it was some time before my thoughts became coherent. Then, alarmed, and fully conscious for the first time in my life that I must be seriously ill or labouring under some mysterious mental aberration, I rose from the floor and sat down in an adjacent chair.

As my eyes wandered vacantly around, they fell upon the circular top of the old *escritoire*. It was partially open. Some one had been at it, then; that was clear! That was no dream, no fancy—scarcely due to a fit, one would think—at least, not of the sort I had tremblingly thought of. Yes, and there was the missing key in the lock. When these facts had fully broken in upon my be-cobwebbed brain, they led to but one idea. Acting on it, I pushed the lid full open, and with the rapidity of thought pulled out one drawer after another, and there, in most of them, were deposited a lot of the articles and objects I had so long missed—there, in this neglected, useless piece of old furniture! I turned them all out in a confusion worse confounded than my thoughts. But there they were—almost every one—cigar-case, silver match-box, trinkets, locket, and pocket-book containing the Scotch bank-notes.

Then how on earth had they come to be in this place? A thief would hardly have stolen them to conceal them thus in my own apartments, unless—unless—and then, very reluctantly, slowly, and at first but vaguely, did I arrive at the conclusion—unless the thief was myself!

Verily this was an alarming supposition, and confirmed my worst dread. I must be suffering under some frightful, inexplicable brain disease, for that I had done this thing I was wholly and totally unconscious.

For days and days, however, I took no action. I hesitated to breathe a word of the extraordinary affair to a soul. Who would believe it? Everybody would say I had gone out of my mind—I thought so myself. I doubted if any doctor would accept as veracious this wild account of my dread awakening to the truth. Yet, as I knew it to be the truth, I set this record of it down while it was all fresh in my memory, and eventually, being unable any longer to bear the horrible suspense and perplexity in which the strange experience had left me, I put it before a medical friend.

To my unspeakable astonishment, he believed every word of it. Then, after answering his endless searching questions, and when he had listened to such verbal additions to the narrative as I could give him, he did not doubt one single point.

"Yes," he said, "amongst other complications, you probably have been walking in

your sleep, and yourself secreting the various articles from time to time. The key, to wit, of the *escritoire*, which you imagine to have been the object taken from behind the looking-glass by the figure you fancy you saw, had been placed there by your own hand. Your brain retained some dim perception of your having done so, and the disordered condition of your nervous system accounts for that perception assuming the shape of a figure resembling yourself, and in a state of partial unconsciousness you dashed upon your imaginary burglar—your own ghost, in fact—fell, and fully restored your senses to their equilibrium by that rap on your head. However, it is enough for you if I tell you that your nervous system is wholly broken down, and that if you don't take a long holiday, go into the country, and for the next two or three months lead a perfectly regular, quiet life, I won't answer for the consequences. No, I shall give you very little medicine—fresh air, quiet, and regularity are the only drugs you stand in need of."

His advice was followed to the letter, for I was thoroughly frightened. Thirty years have passed; I have been long married, and I have never missed a single piece of property, large or small, since that extraordinary August night.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

By Mrs. LEITH ADAMS (Mrs. LAFFAN).

Author of "*Louis Draycott*," "*Geoffrey Stirling*," "*Aunt Hepy's Foundling*," etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAJOR'S SHIP COMES IN.

THE swift curtain of the dusk had fallen across the sea like a grey veil, studded with stars. The moon, with soft and silvery light, had peered through the grey, and rode high in the heaven, making night fairer than the fairest day, before the plash of oars was heard once more, and the grating of a boat's keel on the pebbly shore.

Major Clutterbuck—after showing that he was himself fully capable of taking plenty of "scope"—was returning to the bosom of his family. He might, indeed, have been likened to an elderly sort of dove returning to its ark, for he certainly brought with him an olive-branch—using the word

as a metaphor to express a general atmosphere of peace and joy. His wife and Mabel met him on the doorstep, while, in the background, the "scramble"—Phil, in his night-gown, and holding on to Bertie on one hand, and the bannisters on the other—came swarming down the stairs.

"Why did you go out without telling us, Deabrow! I have been so anxious!" said Mrs. Clutterbuck, unwise as loving woman, alas! so often is.

It seemed as though, so to speak, some of the radiance died out of the Major.

"Now, Marion," he said, with an aggrieved and injured air, "why will you check me in this way—before the servants, too!"

This last was an allusion to Joseppina, whose head was hanging over the rail of the third storey, like an apple over a wall, and whose ivory teeth were displayed in a sympathetic smile. The women-servants of a household always sympathise with the master of it, even when he is clearly in the wrong.

"I really felt so much better, so much lighter of heart, for the little—the little . . . change—I am sure I was humming a tune as I came across, and now, it is all dashed—dashed and blighted—by being met with a reproach—it is, indeed. That domineering spirit of yours, my dear, is really very painful to me at times—"

He sat down languidly in a chair in the hall, as though he really could not stand up under the burden of his wife's imperiousness.

Jim, Algie, and little Phil crowded about his knee, but Bertie slipped his hand into his mother's.

"I say," said Jim, "we're glad you're well again, you know. It's bad when you can't sing for us—and tell us about Giant Grim—"

"Tell 'bout Diant Dim," echoed Algie; and Phil, not to be behindhand, put up his hand to his father's face, and touched it lovingly.

"Phil, he's welly glad yoo be's besser, poor—pappy—"

The Major looked at his wife with reproachful eyes over the children's heads.

"See," that look seemed to say, "how these little ones appreciate me—no reproaches from them, no blighting of the warm, fresh impulses of my nature, no efforts to belittle me in the presence of our servitors."

And all the while Mrs. Clutterbuck was

trembling with anxiety and eagerness—and the flush that stole to her pallid cheek told of a heart that beat hot and fast.

Nothing escaped Mabel.

"We were both anxious, papa," she said; "and no wonder—considering how ill you have been, and how you gave us the slip in such a shabby sort of way. Come, you must have some soup at once. Joseppina, take these naughty boys to bed."

Phil sat down flat on the matting by way of protest, and Algie made himself into an octopus, and clasped determined arms about his sister Mabel; but both the rebels were finally overcome, and delivered over to Joseppina, King Baby kissing his hand condescendingly to his subjects as he disappeared up the wide, stone stairway in his nurse's arms. Bertie and Jim looked on with the calm superiority of the spectators in a street row. They could sit up for an hour yet; and who could say what delightful possibilities an extra hour of "pap's" society might not hold!

Jim was big with the secret confided to his keeping. He had not breathed a word of it yet to any living soul, though his little mind was much exercised as to the changes which might come about presently. Would they all—namely, the "scramble"—go and live with Captain Rowan in that funny place Ricasoli, where the rooms were so small and low, and Joseppina said the ghost of a soldier, who was shot there a long time ago, walked about at nights with eyes that shone like lamps, and a white-bosomed shirt with a crimson hole in the breast where the bullets went in? That was not a nice idea at all, and Jim was afraid Phil would be frightened all the time.

For himself he was not a bit afraid of ghosts; indeed, would rather like to see one—if he had a good big table to get under the while, and could peep out from under the table-cloth.

But Ricasoli might be out of the question, and mother and "pap" would be lonesome without anybody. Perhaps Captain Rowan would come and live with them at Sleima; in which case Jim would make him bowl to him every evening in the field behind the house, while he batted. Some day—pap said when his ship came in—they might go to a big school; and one Cousin Gilbert had told them you were "nowhere" at a big school if you couldn't "handle a bat."

Jim wouldn't like to be "nowhere." He

had been used to being very much "on the spot," and there could be no manner of doubt that Algie was rebellious about bowling; he was also unreasonable—he wanted to bat himself sometimes. Jim had tried once to make Phil bowl instead. But the matter did not turn out a success, for King Baby bowled himself over first ball, and fell on his nose, and Joseppina was cross. Bertie was the best to bowl, he never grumbled; but then Mabel and Lily often wanted Bertie. There could be no doubt, taking all these things into consideration, that Captain Rowan would be most useful if he became a member of the household. The turmoil of all these thoughts in Jim's mind resulted in him making the most excruciating faces whenever he caught Mabel's eye, shaking his head, and pursing up his lips as tight as if they were like mother's work-bag, and drew with a string.

"What is the matter with the boy?" said the Major, when the family had adjourned to the sitting-room, and Jim was going through these manoeuvres.

"I was only looking at Mabel," said Jim, much crestfallen.

"Looking at Mabel," retorted his father, sharply; "do you call those horrible grimaces looking at Mabel? My dear"—turning to his wife—"you are right; these children have too much scope. They must be sent to school—they really must."

"Who's going to pay for us?" said Jim, making a small Colossus of Rhodes of himself, and standing, all bold and unabashed, right in front of the Major.

"Who's going to pay for you? Why, I am, of course," replied that potentate, with a lofty air.

"Is the—the ship come in, father?" said Bertie.

He had often looked for it through the telescope at the turret window; he had often wondered if it ever would come in; and now, perhaps it had glided by without him being there to see it.

"Yes, my boy, I fancy the turn of fortune has come at last; the ship 'laden with golden grain' has reached its haven. Shall pap sing you a song? Well, then, listen:

"Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
And merrily danced the Qua—ker."

But at this stage of the song Jim went into one of his ecstasies, and lay down on the floor to roll it out.

"That's Mothie," he shrieked. "Mothie's

the Quaker's wife. I'd love to see her dance. She'd dance lovely."

"Mothie" did not look like dancing. Her face was white and drawn; her eyes burned as she gazed fixedly at her husband. Mabel, coming in with a cup of soup on a little tray, looked intently from the one to the other, then caught her breath a little as she set the tray down.

In a trice, like a flash, she had gathered something of the state of affairs.

"Jim, get up," she said, in the quiet tone which was never disobeyed by any child of the household; "get up, and go and get your supper—you and Bertie together—and then go quietly to bed."

With a last writhe of his lithe body, a last portentous wink, Jim disappeared. Bertie kissed his mother long and closely, as if he felt, he knew not why, that she stood in need of comfort and sympathy. Then he stopped a moment opposite his father.

"Papa," he said, "I am glad your ship has come in. I have watched for it very often. We must buy mamma a fine silk gown, and a gold serpent with eyes full of light, like the one that Mrs. Lindsay wears, and oh! a hundred things besides, mustn't we, dear papa? Papa, I am glad."

"Thank you, my boy," said the Major, with the air of a victorious general receiving the acclamations of a populace, "thank you. Yes, mamma shall 'walk in silk attire, and siller ha' to spare.'"

This last item would assuredly be a new condition of affairs in the Clutterbuck household; and the grim humour of the remark was not lost upon the utterer of it, as any one might have known by the twinkle of his eye.

At last, the three were alone together; at last the mother and daughter might look for some explanation of this blinding effulgence of satisfaction, which seemed to radiate from the Major's entire being.

"Marion," he began, "I shall want lights in my study to-night. I shall want to be undisturbed."

"Surely, Desbrow," came the reply, "you are not going to have any one in this evening? You are not fit for company, indeed you are not, dear. As it is, I don't feel at all sure you will not suffer from this sudden exertion."

"I really should have thought, my dear, that by this time you would have known how perfectly useless interference in my affairs is. Permit me to retain the use of my own judgement, and to act upon it

Because a man is married I do not see why he should be supposed to lose his own individuality."

"Desbrow, indeed I did not mean——"

But Mabel broke in here:

"Of course, papa knows quite well, dearest, that it is only your anxiety, your dear, loving anxiety for him, that makes you so careful over him."

"Quite, quite," said the Major; then he waved the whole female sex, as it were, gracefully aside: "quite so; women are weak creatures at the best. They let their fears lead them astray. They worry you to death, and then excuse themselves by saying how fond they are of you."

"Desbrow, I never mean to worry you."

"No, no, you never mean to do anything, I know. However, rest assured I am not going to entertain the garrison this evening; I am going to be occupied entirely with business details of a most absorbing nature. I shall in all probability sit late on into the night. You forget that to-morrow is mail-day."

He rose and sauntered towards the now widely-opened window, leaning his arms on the ledge, and looking musingly out into the silver-flooded sea.

"Begone dull care,
I prithee begone from me-e-e."

How tunefully the notes floated out into the stillness and beauty of the night! Truly the Major had a light heart of his own.

Suddenly he turned into the room again, placed himself leisurely in a low lounge—venerable as to years, but comfortable beyond expression—placed his elbows on the arms of the chair, and fitted the fingertips of either hand exactly one to the other.

Mabel was now taking her turn at the window, the sea, and the moonlight, a little fitful smile touching her lips and setting them a-quiver.

A woman's heart sings like a bird as she thinks of the man she loves; its voice is tremulous with passion as she thinks how the man loves her. She is quite contented to listen to this song in solitude and silence. She asks no more of life than the continuance of a melody that ravishes her ear with its sweetness. With Marguerite, Mabel could have stretched out her arms to the silver sea, and cried: "To-morrow, to-morrow will come, and bring my love to me."

She had but to wait, and the rolling hours would bring the boon she craved. The love of these two was still a thing so young, that it held much of youth's restlessness and impatience; therefore would time lag, until sight, and touch, and hearing should again be satisfied and fulfilled. Their love was a secret as yet—from all but little Jim—therefore, the more cherished. Even to give such a secret words to those who have the best right to hear, takes away somewhat from the sense of sacred individual possession. Like a bud folded close, all its perfume is garnered in its heart, and has as yet been given to no wind of heaven to waft hither and thither at will.

"It is our own, we cannot keep it always so; but this will always be a dear, dear time to look back upon—a time when no one in all the wide, wide world knew about it except Jim; and Jim—why, Jim counts for nothing."

Thus pondering, it was strange how Charley's voice and look, nay, even the very touch of his hand, came back to Mabel Graham as living realities—things almost tangible, painted on the thin air in such vivid colours as made them seem pictures cunning as Nature itself.

Far off in the radiance, where the moon kissed the sea, was a dark speck that moved. Coming up out of the still shining, rose the croon and cry of the Maltese love-song—the song that, once heard, we never forget through all the years. It is simple—it has but two episodes—it can only be described in the words of one of the world's sweetest singers—it is "a song of love and longing," love passionate and ideal, longing unspeakable. Mabel listened intently—leaning through the open casement—to the music that spoke for her own full heart. In between the verses she could catch the faint tinkle of a zither, repeating the refrain. . . .

"Ahimé . . . Ahimé . . . M'a-mie!"

Yet some sort of subtle revolt arose in her at the sadness of the boatman's song. On such a night surely some glad triumphant melody would better suit the hour!

Then a voice broke in her musings.

"My little girl, come here to me; I have some wonderful news to tell. . . ."

Thus the Major, in his most winning manner—a manner, let it be said once for all, which was no joke; a manner which was irresistible to those who loved him and

believed in him. This is a way some men have with their womenkind. If they said: "Come here, my dears, and be killed"; then would those women kneel meekly in a row, with their back hair down, and—metaphorically—have their heads cut off. It is not the best men who are loved in this fashion. This is not encouraging for the best men; but it is true for all that, and has, to my mind, a pathetic side to it. I call to mind a man who led his wife and four daughters such a life as it makes one shudder to think of. He died—of a cruel and lingering disease. People looked at you straight in the face, and said: "His family are inconsolable . . . such grief was never seen. . . ." They looked you as if daring you to express surprise, even by a glance, or a raised eyebrow. And what could you say! Again I call to mind a man, who—through all the long years stunted and blighted a woman's life, crippled her sensibilities, slighted and insulted her at every turn; and when he died, she said, her lips, white with watching, quivering as she spoke; "I shall never get over it: my heart is buried in his grave—;" then, with a long, quivering sigh, "He had such a way with him—when he liked. . . ."

There lay the secret of the whole matter. He had "such a way" with him; the little addenda, "when he liked," was significant of much, but did not take away from the main fact.

Well, Major Desbrow Clutterbuck was one of the men who had "a way with him," thereby holding his womenkind in abject subjugation.

When he spoke in that caressing tone, when he said, "My dear wife," or "My little girl," they forgot all the hard words that had gone before. A grand transformation-scene took place, of which the central figure was the glorified Major, and the attendant sprites his entire family.

His "little girl," adjured to come and listen to wonderful and startling news, left her place at the open window, and placed herself dutifully beside his knee.

"Dear mamma," he said, still in the same caressing voice, "you must hear this too," and he held out his hand, as Ahasuerus may have extended the golden sceptre to Esther.

The three thus grouped might well have been taken as a picture of the family union which is declared to be strength. The stately father in the centre; the faded, yet still pretty mother; the fair and gentle

girl at the father's knee. What more would you ?

The Major drew Mabel's yielding form nearer to him ; touched her brow with his lips ever so gently.

"You have always been our blessing, my pet," he said, at length, in a voice slightly tremulous with emotion of some sort, "has she not, Marion ?

"I have tried to be," said Mabel, feeling a little gully, if truth must be told, because of that secret still locked within her own breast—and Jim's.

Mrs. Clutterbuck made no reply at all ; only her hands clenched on the arm of her chair, and she watched her husband's face with a strained intentness.

"What our boys would have done without you, Mabel—as I said to Mr. Jones a while ago—I am sure I do not know."

"Mr. Jones !" said Mabel, opening her brown eyes wide. "Mr. Jones—papa—what has he to do with it ?"

A less astute man than the Major would have given a sharp look at the two women to see how they stood this first thrust of the knife.

But he gazed steadily and a little dreamily out at the fair night sky, seen in all its purple, jewelled beauty from where he sat.

"What has he to do with it ? Ah, my dear, there lies my secret—my glad and happy secret. Mr. Jones has to do with all and everything concerning us—most of all with everything concerning you, dear Mabel—most of all with everything concerning you."

"Desbrow," broke out his wife at this, and her voice sounded like a cry for pity, "Desbrow, you have not——"

He turned a look of reproachful surprise upon her white, appealing face.

"Of course I have not, my dear. I have not actually taken Mabel's name in vain, and finally accepted our good friend's noble and generous offer. Do you know me so little—you, Marion, of all the world—as to believe me capable of so little delicacy of feeling ? Do you imagine I could so little respect the exquisite bloom of maidenly reserve ?"

But Mrs. Clutterbuck was unmelted. Her voice had a hard ring—quite a metallic sound, indeed—and her eyes burned in their sunken sockets.

"What have you said, Desbrow ? What have you done ?"

"What have I said ? Why, told Mr.

Jones that he has my warmest good wishes in his suit. Told him that nothing would give me greater happiness than to see him my dear and respected, highly respected, son-in-law. What have I done ? Arranged for him to be here to-morrow, at six p.m., to plead for himself with the lady—permit me to say, the happy and honoured lady—of his choice."

Honoured she might be ; happy she scarcely looked, with those pallid, hard-set lips, those agonising eyes, full of mingled fear and pain like those of some beautiful, hunted animal driven to bay.

She had drawn back from her father's touch. Still kneeling, she leant back against her mother's knees, looking up at him.

So might some innocent creature look up at the butcher who holds the knife ready for the slaughter.

When she spoke even the cool Major gave a little start.

Could that be Mabel's voice ?

"And you told—Mr. Jones—you thought it likely I should accept this—offer of his !"

"I told Mr. Jones that I was practically sure you would accept this offer of his—practically sure you would act as becomes my daughter. I said that the deep sense of gratitude I was convinced you would feel towards the man who not only—under Providence—saved the life of your little brother, but who—also under Providence—has proved himself the saviour, the benefactor of your father, of your family——"

"I knew it, Desbrow. Desbrow, I knew it was coming to that," cried Mrs. Clutterbuck, throwing herself back in her chair, and wringing her hands.

"My love," said the Major, "be calm. Do not let this sudden and unexpected joy overcome you. Believe me, my dear Marion, I fully enter into your feelings of relief, and—er—of delight in this sudden turn of fortune's wheel ; but moderate your feelings, my dear, you will suffer for it afterwards if you do not. See how calmly I take it all—I, who am the person most concerned."

There could be no reason to reproach Mabel with a want of calmness. She had risen from her humble and caressing attitude. She stood a little distance off, her hands, tightly linked, falling against her white gown, her head held high, her eyes—oh, what would that dear lover of hers have said if he could have seen the look in her eyes just then !

He would always be the same pure, gentle-hearted fellow wherever his lot was cast. She kissed him as she passed; but he never stirred. His sleep, like his nature, was calm and restful. Algie had tossed all the clothes off, and lay there in the moonlight like a sleeping Cupid. His sister's tender hands covered the little rosy limbs anew. Then there was Phil, the household king, his sceptre laid aside, his rule relaxed in the languor of slumber.

Oh, little golden head upon the snowy pillow, what do you know of the sacrifice about to be made for your welfare in a day to come, as sister bends above you—you, her "heart's darling," her dear delight? A hot, bright tear drops upon your tangled locks, and glistens there like dew.

But Jim!

Does Jim sleep like a little wicked serpent—with one eye open?

He is sitting up in his bed in a moment, he has his arms round sister's neck, and is wiping away her tears with his bony hand.

"Jim," she says—and oh! what a sad, sad voice she speaks in—"dear Jim, I want to tell you something. You must never tell that secret, never, to any one. Jim, I can always trust your promise. Promise me you will never tell it, because— Hold me tight, Jim; kiss me a lot, dear; I want it badly. It will never come true."

"Do you mean about Captain Rowan?" said Jim, greatly awed, and holding her off to look at her.

"Yes, I mean about Captain Rowan."

"He won't take us! He thinks we are too many! I do call that mean," said Jim, getting quite red in the face. "And I don't know any one that will do as well, do you?"

"No one—no one—"

"He is always so kind, isn't he? Do you remember when the white hen broke her leg, how he fetched Dr. Halkett to set it, and how it grewed quite beautiful, like the other?"

No reply; only Mabel's head is buried in the bosom of his white night-shirt, and she shakes, so that he has to hold her very tight to keep her.

"And he is such a splen-did bowler. I should have learnt to bat fine; I know I should. But we can't help it; if he won't take us he won't. I say, Mabel dear, don't cry like that. I don't mind, if you don't."

And to show that he didn't mind, Jim cried, too.

"We must comfit one another," said Jim. "Put your head down on my pillow, and I'll comfit you, Mabel, dear. But you mustn't sob so loud, or the others will wake, and want to know about our secret. And we can't tell them that, can we?"

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CROSS CURRENTS.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

Author of "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

SPRING and summer had come and gone again, ten months had passed, and winter was setting in once more.

The October which was just drawing to a close had been an eminently unsatisfactory month as far as climate is concerned—which is perhaps further than many people believe—in London, and, indeed, all over England. Winter seemed to have settled in at least a month earlier than usual; all the winter amusements, as fashionable London understands the word, seemed to be a month late in putting in their appearance. The first sensation of the season—John Tyrrell's "first night"—had excited even unusual interest, coming as it did several weeks earlier than he generally vouchsafed it, and at a moment when London had nothing to talk about but the weather, a subject which allowed of little or no variety in the comments it excited.

Society had so little on its mind that it had had time to be quite excited over the news that the beautiful protégée of John Tyrrell's, who had made so much sensation two seasons ago, and whose first appearance had been delayed, according to the best authorities for various sensational but unfortunately irreconcilable reasons, was to make her first appearance at last, and to make it in an important part on the "first night" in question.

All that dreary October had been spent by Selma in incessant rehearsal. She and Helen were alone together again in their own little house in Hampstead. There was no more talk of a companion for them, there was no kindly Mrs. Cornish coming briskly in and out, and insisting on the observance of all, and more than all, the proprieties. Mrs. Cornish had never seen Selma since the girl had asked her leave to go with Miss Tyrrell on that December afternoon ten months before; and though Helen was always welcome at the big house, her aunt had no more advice to give her as to her household difficulties.

Perhaps, with the exception of the two principally concerned, no one had suffered so much from Selma's most unexpected change of mind as had Helen. The grave tenderness with which Humphrey, to whom Roger had turned in his extremity of pain, broke the truth to her first of all in the house as having the first right to know it, her own incredulity, the dreadful shock of conviction, and her first meeting with Roger, had made upon her personality one of those marks which grow fainter and almost imperceptible as time goes on, but which are never to be obliterated. She had broken down utterly on seeing Roger—he and she and Humphrey alone together, with every one else in the house yet to be told—and such consolatory words as were spoken came from him, and not from her.

"I'm going off early to-morrow morning. Humphrey has arranged—something," he had said, finally, with a grateful glance at his brother. "I—I want you to—take these—things—for her, Helen. It might—bother her if I—sent them."

He stopped abruptly, as if his control over his voice were coming to an end,

and he put into her hand a little packet—the letters Selma had written to him at Liverpool, two or three presents she had given him, and the little gold heart he had found for her in the wood at Blue Rocks. He was turning away hastily, when Helen caught him by the hand.

“Oh, Roger!” she cried, “oh, Roger, it can’t be! She can’t mean it. I’ll go and talk to her. I’ll—”

But Roger had stopped her.

“You’re awfully good to me,” he said, and his manner was at once very simple and very dignified; “but I don’t want her talked to. I wouldn’t have her persuaded. It’s as she chooses. Do you see?” he went on, more hurriedly. “See yourself, and tell—every one—that it’s all over; talking won’t do any good, and it will only—hurt—her. Promise, Helen.”

Helen had promised, and Humphrey, at his brother’s order, and from his own belief that nothing but pain to Selma, or worse trouble still for both, could come from interference, had exacted the same promise from his step-mother before he took his brother away early the next morning.

Nothing could have been kinder or more affectionate than the consideration with which Mrs. Cornish and the whole household had treated Helen. Fortunately for herself she was not over sensitive. She did not add to her pain by any fancies that their feelings towards herself might be in any way affected; but between her loyalty and devotion to her sister and her affection for the Cornishes, she had suffered more than enough. Selma had written her a little, broken, incoherent line, begging her not to be angry and not to come to her; and then about a week later another letter had come to say that she was going to Paris for the rest of the winter with Miss Tyrrell to study, and to ask Helen to come and say good-bye to her. And Helen had gone, of course, and had cried and clung to Selma, who had clung to her in return dry-eyed and very quiet.

“She looks so white,” Helen had confided to Sylvia with many tears that night, “so white and so thin, Sylvia, and her eyes look so odd, as though she was always keeping something in sight. She doesn’t look like Selma at all. Oh, do you think Miss Tyrrell will take care of her?”

Sylvia had been very gentle, and had soothed and reassured her as best she could; but all the time at the bottom of

her heart Roger’s sister felt, as it was only natural that she should feel, that it was just and right that Selma should look white and thin, and that if Miss Tyrrell did not take care of her she would have only herself to blame.

But even Sylvia, though she had grieved for Roger more keenly even than his other brothers and sisters had done, had not been so completely outraged and implacable as her mother. In her reaction from her pride and delight in the engagement, from her pleasure in Selma’s transformation, Mrs. Cornish’s old distrust of the girl had returned upon her, swelled into absolute dislike. She had been so completely taken by surprise, too, and the consciousness which slowly dawned upon her that the signs of Selma’s state of mind, and of the influence of the Tyrrells upon her, had been very patent, if only she had ever dreamt of their significance, irritated her still further. In her eyes—indeed, in the eyes of every member of the family, with the exception of Humphrey—there was no possible reason or excuse for Selma’s conduct. She was as fickle as the wind, and there was nothing else to be said for her.

Selma had sent her aunt no definite message by Helen.

“Tell auntie—” she had begun, and there she had broken down, and Helen had held her close in her arms as she exclaimed, incoherently enough:

“I will, darling! I will!” But the message, such as it was, was never delivered. Helen’s faltering words were cut short by Mrs. Cornish, not unkindly, but decidedly.

“No, Helen, my dear,” she had said, “I don’t want to hurt you, but we won’t talk of it.”

“Auntie,” Helen had answered, moved by her constant, unreasoning loyalty to her sister, and by a vague, undefinable feeling which the remembrance of Selma’s face stirred in her, “auntie, she—she is so unhappy. Oh, isn’t it better now than later? She—she couldn’t help it!”

It was the only plea she could formulate for Selma—she understood as little as did the rest of her world—but those five vague words expressed her vague sense that Selma had acted in some way or other on a mysterious but irresistible inward compulsion; and, having once uttered them, she had clung to them with might and main. “She couldn’t help it.” The words had been in her mind whenever she sat down

to write to Selma during the months she spent in Paris, working, as Miss Tyrrell wrote to her brother, "really ridiculously hard." She had whispered them to Humphrey on his return in February, and had received from him a grave, sad acquiescence which seemed to grant even more than she had asked for.

Humphrey had left his brother on board a steamer bound for New York. After a month spent on the Continent Roger hardly knew how or where, he had suddenly announced his intention of undertaking some business in America, on which some one had to be sent out for a year at least by the firm to which he had bound himself. In his first bewildered misery he had had an idea of getting his contract annulled, and going back to New Zealand for ever; but common-sense was one of Roger's leading characteristics, and common-sense was diametrically opposed to any such proceeding. "Besides," as he argued with himself as the contemplation of his future prospects became gradually possible to him again, "it would cut up the mater." So he propounded his American plan to his brother, to whom it seemed by far the best thing to be thought of, and a brief interchange of letters and telegrams with his firm resulted in his starting from an Italian port without returning to England at all.

After his departure, and Humphrey's return alone, life had become very flat and uninteresting to the Cornishes. The excitement was all over, the chief actors in it had disappeared, and there was nothing more to be done or said on the subject, except when one or other of the girls drifted into a hot argument over her conduct with Selma's deeply grieved but always faithful ally, Mervyn Dallas; or when Mervyn and Helen indulged in a little confidential talk over her rare letters.

In April, however, Miss Tyrrell had brought Selma back to town. It was one thing in that astute lady's estimation to assist at the manufacture of a fashionable actress, with no sacrifice to yourself involved, and quite another to lose the whole of a London season in the process. She had discovered, accordingly, that Selma wanted a little holiday, and she had brought her back to the house in Kensington, where she was to stay until her plans for the immediate future were decided upon—in other words, until she had received her orders from her master. If

John Tyrrell had been the supreme authority in her life before her brief engagement had suspended his supremacy, her old submission to his words, her old trust in him were now redoubled, and, at the same time, their character had somewhat altered. She seemed to turn to him, and hold to him now as to her one sure guide and support, and it was no longer with the blind confidence of a child that she obeyed him; she gave him the deliberate confidence and well-weighed submission of a steady worker to what she thinks the highest authority on the subject to which her life is to be devoted.

John Tyrrell had watched her for two or three days, had gauged the extent of her improvement, privately lifting his eyebrows at the immense amount of work which that improvement must have involved, and he had then proposed that she should go, as a member of his company, on a short tour such as he very occasionally took in the provinces during August and September; such practical experience as she would gain in that way would make it possible, he had said, that she should make her first appearance in London in the following October in an important part. Selma had agreed to these proposals with the grave, steady consideration with which she met all matters connected with her work, and the only difficulty had then been the disposal of the months from April to August. Tyrrell had suggested, with a keen glance at her, that she needed a holiday, and she had protested impetuously against such an idea. He had thereupon become peremptory on the subject, declaring that a holiday before rehearsals for the tour began she must, and should have. She might study through April and May; but she must go away in June. To this compromise she had finally agreed; she had written to Helen to come and see her, and Helen, on hearing what had been decided on, had at once proposed that they should go back together to their own home.

During the two months that followed, it had seemed to Helen that she and Selma were living a kind of dream counterpart of their old happy life together—a life which was like it, and unlike it with the strange, slight, but all important discrepancies so often met with in dreamland. Outwardly everything was as it had been eighteen months before—everything except their intercourse with the Cornishes. Selma worked and studied, and Helen looked

after her and the house. But the spirit of everything was changed—changed with Selma herself. Her old exuberant, radiant enthusiasm was gone, and she worked now with a steady intensity of purpose which never relaxed or altered, and about which she never spoke. The girlish light-heartedness which, in the old times, had made her as bright and impulsive in what she called "play time" as she had been impetuously intent in her working hours, had gone, too. She had grown graver and quieter as though the pain she had passed through herself, and the remorse she had suffered for the pain she had brought to Roger, had killed the youth in her. She was always sweet, and gentle, and her spirits, though they were no longer high, were very even; but she seemed to Helen to have absolutely no life apart from her work. She was always sympathetic and interested in Helen's affairs; but it was a curiously impersonal sympathy. For herself, she had not a thought or an interest in the world which was not connected more or less directly with her profession. And Helen, on whom the change in her sister—though it could hardly be called a sad change—weighed somewhat heavily by reason of its contrast with the familiar surroundings and routine of life, had been very glad—even while she was half afraid that the reminder, which the move brought with it, of their last summer, might affect Selma painfully—when May was over, and they went alone together to a little farm-house in the Lake district for the holiday of which Selma stood by that time very much in need.

From the time of their return to town, a month later, until the end of October, her time had become with every week more fully occupied, and she had grown more and more absorbed, first with rehearsals, then with the constant change of parts which Tyrrell gave her during the short tour, until at last her every waking thought had been concentrated to one point—the first performance of the part of which her very dreams were full, the heroine of the poetical play to be produced by Tyrrell in London on the thirtieth of October.

And now the thirtieth of October had come and gone, and the following day was drawing to its close. It was six o'clock in the evening, and Helen was standing by the pretty little tea-table in her drawing-room, making tea.

The room had lost a good deal of that

curiously-mixed character which had made it so quaint and unusual when the sisters had lived there together before. Selma had now no time or attention for her old "fancies," as Helen had been used to call her somewhat erratically-conceived and impulsively-executed rearrangements of pictures and furniture. It was left entirely to Helen now; and in all unconsciousness on her part she had gradually given it the ordinary aspect of a pretty, conventional drawing-room. Helen was alone there at the moment; but every now and then she paused, and listened expectantly; and when she had finished her operations with the kettle, she poked the fire into a brighter blaze, and drew Selma's own particular chair further into the warmth. Her face was radiantly happy, and she was humming a little air as she waited—the air sung by Selma in her part the night before—a sad little song which pervaded the piece, and which harmonised not at all with Helen's bright, round face. But the song stopped suddenly; a quite different smile beamed out of her eyes, and a little cry of glad surprise broke from her as the door opened, and Humphrey came in.

"Humphrey!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I didn't expect you a bit. It's so late!"

"I couldn't get away before," he answered. "I hope Selma hasn't gone to the theatre? I've come to see her, not you, Nell," he finished, with a slight smile.

"Oh, Humphrey, wasn't she beautiful! Didn't she look lovely! And didn't she make the people cry!"

He smiled again, and his look was quite as much assent as Helen ever looked for in her never-effusive lover; so she went on as though he had spoken:

"I've been longing to talk to some one who saw her"—to Helen the entire performance had consisted of Selma, and nothing else. "The morning papers are lovely, but they are not like talking. When did you like her best, Humphrey? When she says she doesn't love him, or when she comes back?"

"I liked her all through, Nell."

Helen laughed delightedly.

"So did I," she said. "I can't make up my mind when she was sweetest. Oh, Humphrey!" and Helen's voice changed suddenly, and became very low and earnest, "one couldn't wonder, could one, when one saw her last night! She never could have given it up when she's—"

like that. She couldn't help it, could she?"

"No, Nell," he answered, very gently, drawing her to him, "there was no help for her."

There was a little pause. Helen leant against him as they stood together on the hearthrug, with his arm round her; and the two sharply-contrasted pair of eyes looked steadily into the fire for a minute or two with curiously different expressions. Then he roused himself, and said, with a glance at her serious face:

"Was she pleased, Nell?"

The smile broke out on Helen's face again, and she said, delightedly:

"She was quite wild with excitement. I've never—no, never in all her life—seen her look as she did when I went round to her after it was over. She was standing on the stage with Mr. Tyrrell and an old man. I don't know who he was, but he was telling her something about her only having to persevere, and her eyes—oh! I can't tell you how they were shining and sparkling. When we got home, I thought she never would go to bed; she talked and talked as she hasn't done for ever so long—about all she is going to do, you know; and how hard she must work. She seemed to hate the very thought of bed!"

Helen laughed, and Humphrey said:

"What time does she go to the theatre?"

"In about an hour," returned Helen. "I wish she would come down. She has had a bad head-ache all day, of course, poor dear, and I've hardly spoken to her. But she told me she was much better when I went to her a little while ago, and she said she would come down and have some tea before she went out. I do so want to talk it all over with her. It's so delightful to see her so happy. Ah," she added, joyfully, as the door of the room above opened at that moment, "here she comes. That's right. I was just coming to see after you," she finished, a moment later, as the door opened and Selma came slowly across the room.

She was very little altered from the Selma of ten months before, except that the lines of her face were older and graver, and that her eyes were more beautiful than ever for the added depth which pain and thought had brought them. There were dark shadows round them now, and her face was very pale; it was possibly that which made her, as she stood before them in the

flesh, strike curiously against the picture of her which Helen had drawn.

"Ah, Humphrey," she said, gently, "I did not know you were here. Thanks, Nell," with a faint smile to Helen, who was standing, a picture of beaming satisfaction, over the chair in which she wished Selma to sit, and into which the latter sank as though she were very tired.

"Are you better, dearest?" asked Helen, brightly. "We are longing to talk it all over."

"Much better, dear, thanks."

Selma said no more, and her voice was low and listless. Helen, with an indefinable sense that this was by no means the mood for which she had been prepared in her sister, retired temporarily behind the teapot, and there was a little pause.

Then Humphrey sat down near Selma, and said:

"May I congratulate you, Selma?"

Her hand tightened suddenly on the arm of her chair, and she lifted her eyes to his for an instant. It was only an instant, and then she was looking quietly into the fire again; but it seemed to Humphrey as he met them that they were the eyes of one who had received a heavy blow, and not of one who has achieved a triumph. But the next moment she had roused herself as if with a determined effort, and turning to him with a little smile, she said:

"You know there are very few people of whose congratulations I should think more. Did you really like it?"

"I've come to tell you how much I liked it."

"Have you seen the 'Morning Post,' Humphrey?" put in Helen, recovering herself a little, as she gave him Selma's tea.

"I haven't seen any of the papers, I'm afraid," he answered; "but I saw Selma. I'm going to argue out that second act with you, Selma," he went on, turning to her as he spoke. "You play it admirably from the point of view you choose to take; but that point of view is wrong."

Selma turned to him with a movement which was listless still, but less listless than the last.

"What do you mean?" she said, with a note of interest in her voice, which had not been there when she spoke before.

Humphrey's views were well developed. As he grew interested in the discussion, he proceeded to expound them at some length, and Selma's depression seemed almost to leave her as she listened and answered

eagerly. They had reached a point where, as Helen assured them, there was nothing for them to do but to agree to differ, when the servant announced :

"Mr. Tyrrell."

John Tyrrell followed his name quickly into the room, looking very well satisfied with the world at large, as an actor-manager—even if he has no private reason for self-congratulation—may surely be allowed to look when he has spent his day in reading immensely satisfactory newspaper notices on his latest production, and when he has further distinguished himself by producing an entirely successful and most promising débutante.

Selma rose eagerly to her feet at the sight of him, and he came straight up to her.

"How nice of you," she said, as she shook hands. "Have you come to scold me?"

"I've come to congratulate you," he answered. "The papers are quite monotonous, and I really was tired of the sound of your name, Miss Selma Malet, before I got rid of everybody last night." He laughed pleasantly, shook hands with Helen and Humphrey, and then went on, to the former, as he sat down in the chair from which Humphrey had risen: "Was her head quite turned by the time you got her home last night?"

"I think it was enough to turn it, almost," answered Helen, laughing. She did not like Tyrrell much better than she liked his sister; but she was quite ready to make common cause with him in talking of Selma's success, since no one knew so well as he did what success was. "I can't think how she ever subsided, or went to sleep at all after all that. It did take you some time, I'm afraid, didn't it, Selma?"

She turned to her sister as she finished, and Tyrrell followed her example, saying lightly:

"A first appearance is an intoxicating thing, isn't it, Selma, when you are a great success?"

"Yes."

Selma's voice was low and absent, not at all the kind of tone in which such an answer to such a question would naturally be given. She was leaning back again in her chair, looking dreamily at the fire, her face in shadow, and as he looked at her a strange change came to John Tyrrell's face—a change under which it so softened and altered as to be hardly recognisable.

"There is only one first time, Selma,"

he said, in a curiously low tone, which was as unlike his ordinary voice in its retrospective sympathy as his expression of the moment was unlike himself. "Don't forget it."

The next moment he seemed to wake up, as it were, and not noticing that no answer, saving a slight, involuntary movement, came from the graceful figure on which his eyes were fixed, he turned to Helen and said, with his ordinary tone and manner, speaking a little more carelessly even than usual:

"Are you coming down to the theatre again to-night?"

"Oh, yes, please," returned Helen, promptly; "I couldn't half take it in last night, it was all so exciting. Which frock did you like her best in, Mr. Tyrrell? Humphrey, isn't the green one lovely? Did you like that or the white best, Mr. Tyrrell?"

Tyrrell looked at her, with a little cynical twist at the corners of his mouth.

"Popular opinion is in favour of the white," he said. "At least, of the many letters I have had to-day, all of which have something to say about her, at least half rave about her appearance in the second act. Half the smart people in London—he spoke the words with a smile, and the slightest possible tinge of mockery in his tone—"are anxious for an introduction."

Helen gave a little awe-struck sigh of vague pleasure, and Humphrey, who had not been listening to Tyrrell, but staring straight before him in a brown study, observed, absently:

"I should like to paint her."

"So would Conway," remarked Tyrrell, quietly, naming the most fashionable portrait painter of the day; "he told me so last night. He wants to do her for the Academy, and Lord Ellingham"—a well-known and artistically-disposed peer—"made him promise on the spot that the picture should be his."

Selma had taken no part in the talk, either by look or gesture; and she would apparently have contributed nothing to the twenty minutes' conversation that followed, during the course of which Helen was rather overwhelmed by hearing what Tyrrell's friends had written and said to him about her sister, if Tyrrell himself had not now and then directly addressed himself to her, asking her if she remembered this or that distinguished admirer whom he assured her she must have met

during the season she went out with Miss Tyrrell.

Then the clock struck half-past six, and he rose.

"I must go," he said. "You will be starting directly, Selma?"

"Are you not going down to the theatre with us?" she asked, simply, lifting her rather heavy eyes to his face.

He looked at her for a moment, and hesitated. Then he said, quickly:

"No, I am not going straight to the theatre. Good night," he added, to Humphrey, and went away.

"Shall I go and get ready, dear?" said Helen, as the door closed upon him. "It's getting late. I see you've brought your cloak down with you."

Silence followed on her departure. Selma sat quite still; and Humphrey, unless he was started on a subject which interested him, was always ready to relapse into thought. It was not until Helen ran downstairs again, put her head in at the door with the words, "I'm sending for a cab, Selma," and went on into the hall, that Selma roused herself wearily and stood up.

"A second night is rather flat, I'm afraid," said Humphrey, watching her, with a slight smile.

Selma crossed the room and took up her cloak.

"Yes," she said, in a low, toneless voice, "it is flat."

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC.

"Now, then, all aboard the tender who are not going! Cast off, there!"

A flutter of handkerchiefs, a straining of eyes towards eyes, not a few tears, heart-aches, and the dull pain of parting with no assurance of ever again meeting on this side of eternity, and the voyage has begun.

Ere steam was as commonplace an incident of daily life as tobacco pipes, a separation on board a transatlantic boat must have been a terribly grim thing. The odds were then very heavy indeed against the return of the emigrant. They were not inconsiderable in favour of his failing to reach the other side, at the first set off. Once across, however, he would be likely to stay there rather than face the loss of time, the discomfort, and the fresh risk of another couple of trips, for sentimental purposes solely.

To-day, as a matter of fact, the business is hardly more serious than a journey from Cornwall to Cape Wrath. It is a good deal easier, and, with average weather, less trying to the temper. Why, the fifty miles or so by chill mail-cars from Lairg, or thereabouts, to the north coast of Sutherlandshire, would alone make a man prefer the trip across the herring pond. The table on a Cunard boat is likely, moreover, to be much more consoling to the inner man than that of a Sutherlandshire hotel out of the season; let alone the luxuries of oat cake and milk, which are about all—plus some fiery yellow potheen that has paid nothing to Her Majesty—the Highland cottar will then offer the wayfarer.

The first day of the passage is agreeable enough to the old stager; but less so to the novice. The former has his eyes and his wits about him at once. His cabin is secured; but if he fancies he might be better berthed, he is quick to get it managed before the same idea enters other heads. His seat at table, too, may or may not please him. Talkativeness is sometimes a virtue of the second or third water; but our wideawake friend may not like the notion of having for a neighbour yonder enthusiastic and deafeningly loquacious old lady, whose curls are shaking in the energy of her conversation. Our experienced friend may not be a boor; but he loves his porridge and cutlets too well to let anything come betwixt himself and his enjoyment of them. Afterwards, if she pleases, he will be happy to lend an ear in moderation to the good lady's tales about the various benevolent societies of which she is a working member. If he is in the humour, he may even offer her a sovereign for one of them. And it will be easy at any time to give her the slip on the plea of an engagement on the quarter-deck with a gentleman for whom he has extreme regard—to wit, that lovely, well-coloured meerschaum of his.

Heigho! though. As the coast of Wales with the lights of its various pretty villages and towns, gradually pales off into the distance, and the white horses begin to gallop with unnecessary speed and capering, some of the novices on board begin to pale like the coast of Wales. It is not to be wondered at. Maybe it is the first time they have journeyed more than a hundred miles from home. The pulling up of that hard-set anchor of early associations is not accomplished without writhing and trepidation. The Sunda

chimes of the village church were not so very sweet and moving to the ear when they were heard at the distance of a stone's cast and no more, weak in week out, as regularly as the coming and going of the seasons. But now they seem to be chiming with the pitch and toss of the boat—ding dong, ding dong, ding dong, ding dong!—and the melody seems set to the words: "When shall we all see you again!" And so, as the shades of night begin to fall upon the ship, and the lanterns are slung here and there, and the smell of roast meats rises like incense from the cook's galley, our young friend continues to sit on the leeward side of the vessel, heedless of the dinner bell. "Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong, ding dong!" "When shall we all see you again!" He is not in the humour for indiscriminate society. The old folks at home appear to him in a new and fonder light than ever before. He regrets with bitterness the step he has taken, whether from honest ambition or because he has proved himself somewhat unsuited to the method and sobriety of calm English life, with its steps ever in the same groove, and the chorus of "Oh, fie; oh, fie!" from the rest of the world, for the man or woman who kicks against its established customs, or sighs for broader fields of conquest than it can afford him.

These first night's soliloquies, to the hum of the screw and the gurgling of the water against the ship's sides, are as unpleasant as wormwood to the palate. But they may just as well be got over soon as late. They form a stage in one's career, and, once gone through, they never recur with the same intensity. Perhaps in the steerage part of the ship a choir of hymn singers send their melody to impinge upon the sensibility of our friend, with an effect incredibly keen to him. The steerage passengers have hearts like the rest of the world, and it is as disagreeable for them to leave their ancestral homes as for our friend to be reminded of the tranquil happiness that verily and indeed has its residence in the village of his nativity—if only he could have had the wit to be aware of it. They trill forth, "In the sweet by-and-by," or "Home, sweet Home," or, "There is a Land," with a most disastrous amount of sweetness and pathos. It needs no wizard to know that their eyes are moist as they gaze upon the stars or upon the darkening waste of waters, flecked with the foam of the white horses,

while sitting side by side, hand in hand, or with the old folks of their parties pillowed against their strong pliant bodies—all thus going into exile.

Up and down, too, our friend marks the steady pacing of those two tall, straight, sturdy-limbed Norwegian girls, whose noble demeanour and calm blue eyes have drawn attention upon them from the first. They go arm-in-arm, with their hearts divided between the homeland of "Gamle Norge," and that other new home to which they are going by invitation. A sweet, low murmur of song in unison is in their mouths, and there is the peace that passeth all the understanding of the man of the world in those large blue eyes of theirs.

These are moments more or less sacred; and so they may chance in the aftertimes to be regarded. But as the night advances, the revellers from below reappear on deck, with full stomachs, for the post-prandial pipe or cigar.

"What! You haven't dined?" observes one socially-disposed stranger. "Oh, but there is no sea on. You shouldn't give in so early, you know—you really shouldn't. It's bad policy, I do assure you!"

Vainly does our friend protest he feels no qualms. That is regarded as the natural mendaciousness of the sufferer in the beginning of his agony.

"What! You won't have a cigar! Oh, but if you won't eat, and you don't smoke, it's clear you are in a bad way. Now I'll tell you what I did the very first time I crossed the Atlantic—that was in '75, a terrible age ago, you know——"

And so he meanders on, with the ready eloquence of the well-dined man, and does not leave our friend until the desire for a nip of brandy, "as a liqueur, you know," is altogether irresistible within him.

At this conjuncture, our friend, if he has a particle of wisdom left in him, will bid "good night" to the tossing and melancholy waves, and the chilling wind, and make early acquaintance with his narrow bed.

Queenstown, at early morn the following day, is very welcome to all on board. It is a breath of the home-land once more to the Briton. To the veteran it is an assurance that one night has been got through safely. With common luck it will now be easy to leave the coast of Ireland in the rear ere another night comes on. The trundling of mail-bags on board wakes every one; and many are the blue noses

that show upon deck at the untimely hour in the cheerless fog of an Irish morning. Then once again the tender is cast off, and the long spell for New York has begun.

Goethe puts into the mouth of one of his characters in "Wilhelm Meister" the following very sage sentiment: "Since Time is not a person whom we can overtake when he is past us, let us honour him with mirth and cheerfulness of heart while he is passing." This strikes the prevailing note on board our Transatlantic steamer well under weigh. Who knows what may happen ere the day is out? True, there is comparatively little risk of death at sea; but the risk is there. It swells quite big and formidable to some, when the waves are high, and each onrush of the ship is like a dive into the bosom of eternity; when now and again the bows of the ship are buried in the water, and there is a startling gush from end to end, with a drenching for all who are on deck; and when at night the moaning of the wind, and the answering groans of the iron and timber of the ship, make up a sad requiem that sets one telling over the tale of one's sins in a mood of reckless exaggeration. No matter what statistics say. They cannot lessen the bulk of the waves, or abate the wailing in the air. The purser may laugh to scorn the fancy that there can be any risk to life in the vessel. Forebodings will come and dwell with us awhile.

But only for awhile. They, too, pass, like Time himself, like the leaden giants of waves, with their glorious surface fringe of snow and emerald depths, like the gull with spread wings, which tarries driftingly for a minute or two in the wake of the ship, and then soars away over the great waste of sullen waters.

Mirth and cheerfulness are not moods which all of us can conjure into activity just when we will; but with a little help, or the aid of example, they are ready enough to declare themselves. The young scapegrace who is being packed off to the States, with a note for five hundred dollars in his pocket, and the knowledge that he now stands for good and all upon his own legs alone; the Irish lad but just in his fourth lustre, sans shoes, sans friends, sans everything except a bit of a bundle, a stick, and the most lively hopes in the world; the cracked financier, who has found the London Stock Exchange too much for him; the Rutlandshire farmer, who proposes to see if the talk of fortunes

in Western land is mere wind-bag pother; the fallow-cheeked invalid, off to Florida, sanguine about his chances of reaping health and lucre at the same time, with firm trust in oranges and pine barrens; the dozen or more self-assertive families returning from a rush over Europe, and calculating they've had a real good time, with as mild an expenditure of dollars, and as many capital cities, lakes, and celebrities upon their list to show for their pains as in their most ardent moments they dared hope for at the outset; a missionary here; a millionaire there; a party of actors and actresses; half-a-dozen officers of the Salvation Army; and divers nondescripts, who might be philanthropists in disguise, but who are probably light-fingered rogues—such is the company on an average Atlantic trip. It is wonderful how well, upon the whole, it mixes. The philosophy of Noah's contemporaries, ere there was talk of the Flood, seems to get into their blood by way of the North Atlantic breezes.

Routine soon has hold of one upon an Atlantic steamer. There is the early call for the bath—a luxury not always in much request. After that the barber, with deft finger and thumb, does his duty upon chin after chin. A turn up and down the deck in the face of the lingering obscurations of the dawn effects among the clouds, and an "oh" or an "ah" of interest in the vessel seen twenty miles to the south, is sufficient additional preface to the breakfast for which one feels the readier day by day.

There are lazy folks on board who will not sacrifice their habits for the good of the ship, and—it may be said—of themselves also. These reprobates break their fast abed, and lounge towards the quarter-deck about an hour before noon.

It is in part the fault of the debauch of whist and whisky of the night before. But they lose something by this curtailment of the hours of the day. It is good to rise with the sun on shipboard, and to follow his eminence to bed as soon as possible. One may not be in the best of humours during the infancy of the day; but the more valorously one meets the situation, the more speedily does the cheerfulness of common life get the upper hand.

Some people find time heavy upon their hands when they are in the society of the North Atlantic waves. It is apt to be so unless one makes friends with one's neighbours, or be prepared beforehand, like Macaulay, with a library to be digested

during the passage. Upon the whole, it is easier to chatter idly, or read for diversion solely, than to undertake a course of study or serious work at sea.

The idleness of the sea is charming, and work, except at the dinner-table, is not to be endured. It is wonderful, too, what a stock of information it is possible to acquire in a week's passage to New York. People are unmuzzled in mid-ocean. Sir Pounds Cash is as like as not to forget all his habitual self-restraint when he realises that his valuable opinions about stocks and shares, and loans floating, or to be floated, are not in peril of being snapped up and wired to the City papers almost ere they are out of his mouth. With a little management, he may be made to give up some of his precious and expensively-acquired wisdom; and, once the vein is struck, it may be developed discreetly for hours upon end without exciting the scruples of the able financier.

The confidences between men and maids in mid-Atlantic are, of course, notorious. They are a staple nucleus for about a score of novels every year. The conditions are all in favour of such intimacies, or pseudo-intimacies. It is like being on an island almost deserted. The world's codes of conduct are not of much force when there is nothing in sight except water, and the society newspaper is as if it were but a phantom creation of a phantom brain. The hearts of both man and maid may be forestalled; but it does not signify. The Atlantic is a rare necromancer. It washes out the past with those great sweeping waves which almost menace to swallow up present and future also. So there are a score of opportunities for sweet love-making which will not eventuate in anything, but which is none the less pleasant for the time being. One may get an insight into a girl's heart during these six or seven days such as her accepted squire on "terra firma" will never have until they twain have gone to mother church, and the veil has been rent from both their natures simultaneously.

But of all the experiences the untiring ship can offer a man, commend me for interest to the various autobiographies of the passengers themselves. I don't know what it is that makes men so unblushingly free in the exposure of their histories on board ship, unless it be the same sense of isolation from practical life that unlocks the rich mind of Sir Pounds Cash. I haven't a doubt that

many of the tales that are told in the gloaming, with the aid of tobacco and the subdued whistling of the wind, are rank fibs. Some there are, however, that ring true from first to last. A man whom you have never met before, and to whom you would perhaps not do more than nod lightly if subsequently you met him in Broadway, unbosoms himself to you as if you were a deputed agent of the recording angel himself. He tells you where he first went astray in the battle of life, and how he chafed under the wound caused by a chance shot; how in desperation he next rushed into the thick of the *mêlée*, and anon was carried away more dead than alive. You ask yourself in surprise, "What have I to do with this man that he should make this unbridled confession of his errors and misfortunes to me?" But still you listen on; and as such confidences have a tendency to grow with practice, it may happen that midnight finds you in the same corner of shelter by the smoking-room, listening drowsily to a continuation of that beginning long, long ago over the after-dinner pipe. It is quite on the cards, however, that next morning you will requite your friend for his loquacity by cutting him dead. He began his prattling in the dark, and you know nothing of his actual personality except his voice. It is therefore a very pardonable discourtesy, and perhaps a veiled kindness to the man himself.

So the hours glide by until the half-way wave has been passed. This is the great epoch for a reconstitution of individualities. One has now done with retrospect. It is time to look ahead. The past may bury its dead, if it have any to bury, and it is pretty sure to have several ugly corpses which it will be for every one's profit to get interred. The future shall atone for all the shortcomings of the past. Eyes hitherto as dull as lead begin to sparkle like the eyes of a girl at her first dance. That dear little will-o'-the-wisp, Master Hope, is in fine fettle from this day forward, until we are through the customs' bother, and free to set foot on the land of Columbia, where every man is as good as every other man, if he is not, as is more probable, considerably his superior.

As soon as we are well in the Hudson, and begin to recognise the old landmarks of American shore, the old forces of civilisation return to take up their abode with us. We are half, or more than half, ashamed of our intimacies in mid-ocean.

Sir Pounds Oash is infinitely vexed that he has been led to say what he has said about that Charleston and San Francisco Grand Trunk Railway. It is quite likely that the gentleman, to whom he has spoken so unwittingly, will straightway go on Wall Street with his evidence.

However, it cannot be helped. The voyage itself is as a tale that is told.

"Good morning, Mr. Dashley," says the pretty young girl to the gentleman with whom she has spent five or six hours daily; and she lightly offers him her hand.

"Oh, good morning! We've had a nice time, haven't we?"

"So so. Good-bye; I see mamma on the stage—and Mr. Huntingtower, too"—her husband of next month.

The voyage is over. Nothing remains to be done except to display one's pocket-handkerchiefs and shirts to the emissaries of Uncle Jonathan, and take up afresh the threads of on shore life.

UPRIGHT BURIAL.

"In tombs of the Stone Age," says Lubbock, "the corpse appears to have been almost always, if not always, buried in a sitting posture, with the knees brought up under the chin, and the hands crossed over the breast." This erect attitude in the last resting-place of the men of the far distant Stone Age seems somewhat strange and uncanny to us of modern and more civilized days. We associate death with rest, and the recumbent position, the attitude of still repose, is naturally allotted to those who sleep the sleep that knows no waking. But the sitting or upright posture, besides being of very great antiquity, has been found to have been customary in very many parts of the world, and in some countries and places is not yet obsolete. It has been observed in early British tombs, in Denmark, among the Brazilian aborigines, in India, and in America. Herodotus tells us that the Libyans buried their dead sitting, and were careful to prevent any one dying in a reclining position. It was the universal practice among the North American Indians to place their dead sitting in holes scooped in the ground, and over them to heap a mound of earth. This seated position was also customary of old among the people of Peru and the Aztecs of Mexico. A good many years

ago the "Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy" had an account of the opening of some small earthen tumuli on the Curragh of Kildara. Under the mounds were discovered skeletons erect upon their feet, with iron-headed spears in or near their hands. Interment in an upright position is said to be still practised in Lapland.

Many isolated instances of erect burial have been recorded within historic times. When Frederick Barbarossa, in 1165, opened the tomb of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle, the monarch was found to be seated on a marble throne, with the imperial mantle round his shoulders. His sword was by his side and the Gospels on his knees. Some of these relics are now in Vienna, but the throne may still be seen at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Barbarossa himself was buried in a somewhat similar attitude. This posture is so indicative of a merely temporary repose, of a waiting until the fulness of time shall restore the seated monarch to animation and vigour, that it may perhaps have helped to originate, or give stronger life to the legends which for ages have predicted the return to reign on earth of both Charlemagne and Frederick Barbarossa.

At Monza, where the celebrated iron crown of Lombardy used to be kept, the tourist can see erect in the churchyard wall the mummified remains of Ettore Visconti, a member of the famous Lombard family, which for many generations was distinguished in the literature, the science, and the political feuds of the Middle Ages. The upright position in one singular case was involuntary. One of the favourite books of our forefathers, three hundred years or so ago, was that containing the adventures of the famous German rogue Eulenspiegel, or Howleglass, as the old English translator called him. The adventures were often broadly comic, sometimes dull, and very frequently coarse; but, like those of the Spanish Guzman d'Alfarache and similar worthies, they were reading of which our progenitors never tired. Eulenspiegel's final disappearance from the scenes of his exploits was in keeping with his life. He was buried in 1350, and the story goes that as the body was being lowered into the grave one of the foot-ropes gave way, and the coffin was deposited erect, in which position Howleglass was left; for as he was like no one else while he was alive, so, said those present, he was resolved to be

as queer when dead. This curious burial is said to have taken place under a large lime-tree at Möllen, near Lubeck.

In our own country there have been many instances of burial in an upright position. Ben Jonson is said to have been so buried in Westminster Abbey. His uncomfortable position has been immortalised by Thomas Ingoldsbay :

Even "rare Ben Jonson," that famous wight,
I am told is interr'd there bolt upright,
In just such a posture, beneath his bust,
As Tray used to sit in to beg for a crust.

Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Hydriopthia," says that "some Christians decline the figure of rest, and make choice of an erect posture in burial." It is somewhat difficult to see the reason for this preference. But the fact of its being a matter of choice on religious grounds, and not merely an exhibition of eccentricity, may account for the numerous cases of upright burial in English churches or church vaults. Sir Christopher Conyers was so interred, in 1693, in a vault at Easington, in Durham. A few years earlier, in 1679, the then Recorder of Nottingham, one Clement Spelman, was buried upright in a pillar in the chancel of Narburgh church, so that the inscription on the pillar is just on the level of his face. Fuller, in his "Worthies," speaks of a family of Pagets, who were all buried erect in a vault under Drayton church, in the county of Middlesex.

According to tradition, two families, the Claphams and the Mauleverers, were accustomed to be interred in this position in a chantry vault under Bolton Abbey, in Yorkshire.

Another of these somewhat uncanny family gatherings is to be found in a brick vault under the organ chamber of Blickling church, Norfolk. Here are assembled several generations of the Hobart family. In the vault is a series of niches, and in nineteen niches there are coffins standing erect. The first contains the remains of the Sir John Hobart who constructed the vault and died in 1647; the last is sacred to the first Earl of Buckinghamshire, who died in 1756. In the chancel of another Norfolk church, that of Breckles, on an oval black marble slab which marks the tomb of a certain Lady Hewit, there is the motto: "Stat ut vixit erecta."

The choice mentioned by Sir Thomas Browne is even yet sometimes exercised. In 1864 a well-known Dublin physician was buried, by his own desire, in an up-

right position in a vault under St. Michan's church in that city, while in a vault below the church attached to one of the monasteries of Messina, are buried many of the monks. They are placed in a sitting position, and can be viewed through a grating in the vault. Similar sights can be seen near Palermo, and in the vaults of one of the churches in Malta.

The practice of sitting burial is said to be still observed among some of the Mah-rattas, and in some other parts of India. In Japan it was the rule, and the body was carried to the grave seated in a chair. This is graphically shown by an engraving in Laurence Oliphant's "Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan, 1857-9;" but Japan has of late years so rapidly adopted modern European forms and customs that sitting burial will probably soon be a thing of the past. One more remarkable instance of this kind of interment may conclude these notes. In 1862 the Coptic Patriarch died at Cairo, and the striking ceremonial that attended his funeral has been described by an eye-witness. The Patriarch, clad in magnificent robes, was borne in his chair to his last resting-place. His feet rested on a cushion, a crozier was in his hand, and a mitre on his head. After long services and many ceremonies the corpse was carried to the vault and re-seated in the chair. The Armenian Patriarch read the final service and the tomb was then closed.

"FOR BETTER FOR WORSE."

"I HAVE never pressed thee, dear," he said
(The wild waves rage over Whitby Scar);
"But 'twas but for a month they sailed away,
And twice thou hast counted a year and a day,
With never a word of the 'Flying Spray.'
An' thou knowest thy Jean is dead.

"Thou wilt never hold me close and dear"
(The wild waves roar over Whitby Scar).
"But thy lot is lonesome, and toll is hard,
An' if thou wilt gi' me thysen to guard,
I'll never ask thee for more reward,
An' I'll hold thee very dear."

At last she sobbed: "I will be thy wife"
(The wild waves thunder on Whitby Scar),
She had learned to lean on his tender care;
It is ill on a lonely path to fare;
And never a woman but fain would share
The roses and wine of life.

The wedding-day drew near apace
(The wild waves call upon Whitby Scar).
When a lad ran hard to his cottage home,
And bade him, "Haste thy ways and come,"
Where, with piteous eyes and white lips dumb,
She looked up in his face.

And at last she whispered : " No wedding-day "
 (The wild waves crash upon Whitby Scar)
 " Will ever bring me, dear, to thee ;
 A vision has come in sleep to me,
 And I know he lives, though deep in the sea
 Lies the wreck of the ' Flying Spray.'

" I saw him, dear—it is sore on us both "—
 (The wild waves rave over Whitby Scar)
 " I saw him weary, and worn, and white,
 But the coin we broke, in his hand shone bright,
 And he kissed it under a great moon's light,
 And said : ' We keep our troth.'

" I doubt I have used thee very ill "
 (The grey waves wail over Whitby Scar) ;
 " But thou art tender and strong to forgive,
 An' be friends the bit that I has to live,
 Sitha ! the bees have left my hive !
 But thou wilt be happy still.

" And Jean looked up to the crimson skies "
 (The ebb-tide sobbed upon Whitby Scar) :
 " I heard his voice speak clear and strong ;
 He said : ' Ma lass, it is not for long,
 For Heaven sets straight what earth makes
 wrong,'
 And a smile was in his eyes."

And or ever another autumn came
 (The blue waves sigh over Whitby Scar)
 They laid the pale girl to her rest,
 With her broken sixpence on her breast,
 And we mourned her gently who loved her best.
 For her weary watch was done.

That day on a desert tropic isle
 (The soft waves whisper on Whitby Scar)
 A lonely man lay down on the sand,
 A token tight in his wasted hand,
 And passed to the undiscovered land,
 And his dead lips wore a smile.

THE HANDEL FESTIVAL.

THE whirligig of time has again brought in the great Handel Festival, which takes place every three years, and which will again be held this year at the Crystal Palace on the nineteenth, twenty-second, twenty-fourth, and twenty-sixth of June. Such being the case, it may not be uninteresting to take a short review of the rise and progress of the Festival—by far the greatest musical festival in England, and, with the exception of that at Bayreuth, in the world.

George Frederick Handel was born, "as every schoolboy knows," in Lower Saxony in February, 1685, and died in London, a naturalised Englishman, in 1759. Almost all his works were produced in England, and it was in England that they were most appreciated. When, therefore, the centenary of his death approached, it was felt that in England some appropriate celebration—some performance of his

works on a scale grander and fuller than had ever before been attempted—should take place.

The centenary of his birth had been celebrated in 1784—the date of his birth was then supposed to be 1684—by three performances, of which two took place in Westminster Abbey, and one at the Pantheon. These were so successful, that two more performances were given at the Abbey, when the orchestra consisted of five hundred and twenty-five performers : fifty-nine sopranos, forty-eight altos, eighty-three tenors, eighty-four basses, ninety-five violins, twenty-six violas, twenty-one violoncellos, fifteen contrabasses, six flutes, twenty-six oboes, twenty-six bassoons, one double-bassoon, twelve trumpets, twelve horns, six trombones, four drums, one conductor and organist, who seems to have been one and the same man. At the Pantheon the number of performers was only two hundred. Similar Festivals were held in 1785, 1786, and 1787.

The next musical festival took place in 1834, but it was not confined to Handel's music. It had, however, a most important effect, for it paved the way to the establishment of the Sacred Harmonic Society, which worked wonders for choral music, and familiarised the public with oratorios in their entirety.

So, having glanced at the best known among the early Handel concerts, we come down to the approach of the centenary of Handel's death, and find the idea started that something very special ought to be done. There were two great difficulties in the way. Who was to take it up ? What building was suitable for it ?

The body which was found to take it up was the Sacred Harmonic Society, which had gradually become the leading spirit in choral music and oratorio, and which, from the work which it had done, was worthy to be considered the leading musical body in England. The Society had originated a series of performances on a scale equal to festivals of former years, and was almost the first body to rely upon complete oratorios for its attraction. In twenty years—between 1836-1856—the Sacred Harmonic Society had given in Exeter Hall three hundred and forty-four performances, at which the audiences are computed at six hundred and fifty thousand persons, which is almost equal to the number of persons attending all other festivals during the same time—those, that

is to say, in Westminster Abbey, in York Minster, in Edinburgh, Norwich, Birmingham, Chester, Derby, Dublin, Liverpool, Manchester, and Bradford; in all seventy-five festivals, besides the three chorfestivals at Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford. If the total number of persons attending these last be added, the attendance would exceed the number given above; but as they would include also those people who attended secular concerts and balls, a large deduction must be made.

Of the three hundred and forty-four performances given at Exeter Hall by the Society, one hundred and seventy-two consisted of entire oratorios of Handel, including "The Messiah," "Israel in Egypt," "Judas Maccabæus," "Samson," "Solomon," "Joshua," "Saul," "Jephthah," "Deborah," "Athaliah," and "Belshazzar." With this record to look back on, together with the fact that they had a complete organisation in the shape of a number of superintendents, skilled in their duties and with an extremely good knowledge of the capabilities of the metropolitan performers, it is not surprising that the directors of the Sacred Harmonic Society should have felt themselves called upon to take the initiative in the Handel commemoration.

The next great point was the place where the performance should take place. It was felt that none of the buildings which had hitherto been recognised as suitable for musical festivals were adapted for a performance on so large a scale, and that the only place which could be turned to account was the Great Central Transept of the Crystal Palace. That this idea was correct is shown by the fact that it is now almost a generally accepted saying that Handel might have almost written his oratorios for the Crystal Palace, or that the Crystal Palace might have been built for the performance of Handel's works. No one who has heard "Israel in Egypt" as there performed could deny the truth of this statement. The difference in the sizes of the places then considered available, so far as refers to their ground space, will be shown by the following list. Hanover Square Rooms, three thousand seven hundred and eighty square feet; Freemasons' Hall, three thousand nine hundred and fifty-six square feet; Saint Martin's Hall (afterwards burnt down), six thousand six hundred square feet; Saint James's Hall—only then proposed to be built

—eight thousand and forty square feet; Surrey Gardens Hall (afterwards burnt down), nine thousand three hundred square feet; Exeter Hall, ten thousand and eighty-seven square feet; Crystal Palace, Central Transept, sixty thousand four hundred and eighty square feet. The latter was obviously the place of all others, although there were suggestions that it was too far from London, and that it would be better to erect a new building. Some people even ventured to doubt whether the glass building would stand the tremendous volume of sound, and wrote to the Society to urge that objection. In fact, the notice in "The Times" on the first performance started with the statement that the performance had taken place, and that the Palace still stood, and that all doubts as to its insecurity were set at rest.

Despite these objections, the Crystal Palace was selected, the Crystal Palace Company approached, and everything was soon settled. The directors did not propose to plunge wildly into the centenary Festival without knowing exactly what they were about, so a preliminary Festival—entitled, the Grand Handel Musical Festival of 1857—was arranged for, and duly came off. The performers were three hundred members of the orchestra, and two thousand of the chorus, with the most powerful organ that could be built for the occasion. The three days saw each an entire oratorio performance, these being the "Messiah," "Israel in Egypt," and "Judas Maccabæus," with one day's Rehearsal.

Having got over the preliminary Festival, preparations were pushed on for the centenary itself. Although the preliminary Festival had been a great success, it was felt that much of the volume of the sound was lost, so it was decided to improve the orchestra. The improvements consisted of a solid boarded enclosure running round the entire back of the orchestra, and in a roof of oiled and hardened canvas, joining the enclosure, and extending forward beyond the line of the conductor's seat. At the same time it was settled to increase the number of performers from two thousand three hundred to four thousand. The orchestra was also enlarged to the full width of the transept, namely, two hundred and sixteen feet, with a central depth from back to front of one hundred feet. This made its width double the diameter of the dome of Saint Paul's Cathedral, and gave it a larger area than the combined orchestras of Westminster Abbey, at the

Commemoration of 1784; York Minster; the Birmingham Town Hall; the Leeds Town Hall; Saint George's Hall, Bradford; and the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool. It is a curious fact, and one well worth recording in these days of jerry-building, that this orchestra was put up as a temporary structure for this performance. So well, however, was it built, that it stands to the present day, and is the one now used. It is to be feared that such construction is hardly the general rule of the present day. It was constructed of timber, without the aid of an architect, from designs made by one of the management of the Crystal Palace, and carried out by the Company's Clerk of the Works. The London contingent of the chorus was again selected by the Sacred Harmonic Society, and the country contingent by the societies in the various towns in which choral societies existed.

Four days were allotted, one for Rehearsal, the second for the "Messiah," the third for the Selection, and the fourth for "Israel in Egypt." The performance came off in due course, and the effect was that the audience were perfectly amazed and thrilled—the effect being more tremendous than could possibly have been expected—and the Handel Festival was an established fact. The performances were also successful in a pecuniary sense, far beyond the expectations of the managers, indeed, thirty thousand more people having attended them in 1857, the total number being eighty-one thousand three hundred and nineteen persons.

So it was decided to establish the great Triennial Handel Festival in 1862, and from that time till 1883 it was held every three years, without a variation from the right year.

In 1862 the roof of the orchestra was solidly roofed in, and the orchestra was made as complete as it could be. In this year the number of performers was three thousand six hundred and thirty-five, exclusive of librarians, stewards, and other officers, while the days were allotted to the same performances as in 1859, and indeed this order has been kept ever since. In this year the attendance was on each day respectively, fifteen thousand four hundred and twenty, thirteen thousand six hundred and seventy-seven, fourteen thousand nine hundred and fifteen, and fifteen thousand four hundred and twenty-two, which gives a grand total of fifty-nine thousand four hundred and thirty-four.

In 1868 the total number of persons attending was seventy-nine thousand four hundred and sixty-five. In 1871, 1874, 1877, 1880, the performances were repeated; but in 1882 the Sacred Harmonic ceased to exist, and the Handel Festival of 1883 was the first under the sole direction of the Crystal Palace Company; but they were still helped by the superintendents of the old society, and even now have the assistance of those who remain. In this year, too, the Handel Festival suffered by the illness of Sir Michael Costa, who had been conductor from the very beginning in 1857, what seemed to be an irreparable loss. The Crystal Palace Company, however, had not been still in the matter of music, and had formed an orchestra of its own, which had, under the conductorship of Mr. Manns, become far famed; indeed, the Saturday Concerts are amongst the best orchestral concerts in the world. To Mr. Manns, therefore, who had started at the Crystal Palace as a piccolo player in the orchestra, and risen to first violin and then conductor, and who appears among the violins in some of the earlier Handel Festivals, the baton was entrusted for the Handel Festival when Sir Michael Costa unfortunately was unable to take his accustomed place. When Mr. Manns ascended the platform on the first day he must have felt that his reputation was practically at stake, and he must have felt the moment an anxious one. When he descended he had triumphed indeed, and had proved a worthy successor to his predecessor. There is one innovation which Mr. Manns made when he had gained his position, an innovation which can hardly be regarded as anything but good. Sir Michael Costa made the Rehearsal day simply a bad performance, Mr. Manns makes it a Rehearsal in fact as well as in name, and pulls the chorus up and talks to them if the performance is not altogether to his liking.

In the ordinary course of things the next Festival would have fallen in 1886; but as 1885 was the bi-centenary of the birth of Handel, it was felt that it would be more fitting to put the Festival forward a year, and hold it in 1885 to celebrate the occasion. In 1888 the last Festival took place, which brings us down to the present year, 1891, when we again have an opportunity of hearing Handel's works on this tremendous scale.

Let us now glance back at the great

array of soloists who, from the beginning, have taken part in these Festivals. Of those who sang in the first year, 1857, only one remains, or rather did remain, till a very short time ago, before the public. Sims Reeves sang in 1857, and only took leave of us the other day. He also sang in every Festival up to and including 1874, or in seven Festivals in all. Apropos of the old fear that the glass might not stand the volume of sound, it is a tradition with some people who were in the top gallery that once while Sims Reeves was singing "Sound an Alarm," a pane of glass did crack. Of course, they do not mean that the top notes did the deed; but, as a coincidence, it is curious. Another anecdote about Sims Reeves and the Handel Festivals shows a peculiar side of stage fright. Just before one Festival, 1871, I think it was, Sims Reeves had a severe illness, from which he had scarcely recovered when the performances came on. The effect of this was to make him doubt his powers so much that on the "Messiah" day he was so overcome with nervousness that he could by no means be induced to ascend the platform; and sing that day he did not. On the Selection day, however, he had so much got over this fright that he not only sang, but those who were fortunate enough to be present say that he sang better than he had ever sung before. And this is praise indeed, for it is doubtful whether a better singer of Handel's music—Clara Novello, perhaps, alone excepted—has ever been heard.

In the same year Herr Formes sang for the only time—Herr Formes, whose voice was so powerful that it is said that he could sing into a tumbler and break it by the volume of sound produced. Madame Clara Novello, Madame Rudersdorff, Miss Dolby, Montem Smith, and W. H. Weiss were the other soloists on this occasion.

At the centenary in 1859 the soloists were the same, with the addition of Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, and the substitution of Signor Belletti for Herr Formes and Montem Smith. In 1862 Mademoiselle Titiens appears, Madame Clara Novello dropping out, while Mademoiselle Parepa is also added to the ladies; and the men remain the same. In 1865 we come quite into touch with the present time, for Mademoiselle Adelina Patti and Mr. Santley appear—Mr. Santley singing at every succeeding Festival down to the

present time. In the succeeding year the most notable changes were Mademoiselle Titiens and Mademoiselle Christine Nilsson in the place of Patti; while Signor Foli made his first appearance. Madame Sinio, Madame Patey, and Madame Trebelli were the most notable addition in 1871, with Mr. Vernon Rigby added to the tenors. In 1874 there was but one important new appearance, and how important that appearance has been to the tenor solo music at the Handel Festival it would be hard to say.

This appearance was that of Mr. Edward Lloyd, who has taken part in every Festival since, and he was the more needed as this Festival was the last at which Sims Reeves appeared. In 1877 Madame Patti again appeared; and this Festival saw the first of Madame Albani, and also of Herr Henschel; whilst 1880 again welcomed Patti and Albani, and hailed the first appearance of Mr. Maas; while in 1883 there was only one first appearance of importance, that of Madame Valleria. In 1885 there was no first appearance at all of importance. The next year saw a notable addition in Madame Nordica; while at the present Festival Miss Macintyre will make her first appearance.

Summing up the singers who have appeared at four or more Festivals, we find that Santley has sung at no fewer than nine Festivals, from 1865 till 1888, and is still singing; Madame Lemmens-Sherrington at eight Festivals; Sims Reeves, Foli, and Madame Patey, each at seven; Madame Rudersdorff, Madame Trebelli, and Lloyd, at six; Meesdames Sain-ton-Dolby and Albani at five; while W. H. Weiss and Madame Titiens performed at four. The other singers who have been mentioned sang less than four times.

If we turn from the soloists to the masses, we shall find a good deal to marvel at in the variety of places and the distance from London of these places from which the various contingents come; from anywhere between Edinburgh and Penzance the enthusiasm for art brings up the units which go to make up the whole mass of the choir of the Handel Festival.

This year will see a great change in the component parts of the choir. Of course when a choir like this has been got together so many times, many, who have in their time been most excellent singers, have lost their voices, and are still admitted

with results not a little detrimental to the general effect. Of course it seems a hard course to take to refuse many old performers, but it was felt that things must be altered, so this year a great sweep has been made. The effect is said, by those who have been privileged to attend the preliminary rehearsals of the London contingent, to be most excellent, the gain in freshness being most marvellous.

Another evil in connection with chorus and band is this year being vigorously attacked, and that is impersonation. It seems wonderful that anybody should want to sit on the orchestra without performing, but so it is. Mrs. Jones has a nice voice and knows her Handel well; but Mrs. Jones is ill, so she passes on her ticket to Mrs. Smith, who can't sing and knows nothing about her Handel. In an extreme case, this was once discovered amongst the violins. How it was found out does not appear, but one year amongst the violinists was a gentleman who fiddled away vigorously all day and was discovered afterwards to have no knowledge of the instrument at all. He had well covered his bow with suet, so he could scrape away to his heart's content and make no sound. It pleased him and did no actual harm; but it would naturally have been better had his place been occupied by a competent performer. Such attempts will be made impossible in future.

Of course, connected with this Festival there are many curious anecdotes and superstitions. One of these latter is that there is always a thunderstorm in the course of the week, and indeed it generally is so. Once the expected thunderstorm came in the course of the Hailstone Chorus in "Israel in Egypt," and the effect of the chorus with the natural accompaniment was awesome. Another curious fact is that the heat at the back of the orchestra is so great—the thermometer as a matter of fact rises to seventy degrees—that the great organ gets out of tune, and men have to be at work all the time keeping it up to pitch.

Such is a short history of the Handel Festival—a Festival which goes far to remove the reproach that we are an unmusical nation, and which cannot but bring credit on the nation which supports it. Let us hope that the present year will see as great a success as has marked any former years, and that the Festival will long continue to be one of the musical institutions of the country.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).
Author of "Louis Draycott," "Geoffrey Stirling," "Aunt Hepsey's Foundling," etc.

CHAPTER IX.

"THERE'S THE CHILDER TO THINK OF."

"AH now, be pacable, can't ye? Stay still now, an' behave yourself, and I'll be after makin' ye the elegantest baste as is in the whole regiment. Ye should keep in moind who ye are, an' what's looked for in the likes o' ye. Little dawgs of your sort's got to be done this way; so calm your moind, an' take it aisy; an' if ye kick loike that, and splash me in the oi wid yer nonsense, it 'ull be presently the worse for ye, my jewel. And it's myself will make the love-locks fly when I come to comb ye."

Private Doolan, No. 10 Company, servant to the Honourable Bob, was washing the Honourable Bob's Maltese terrier, Nancie by name—called also "Sweet Nancy," "Little Posy," and half-a-dozen other diminutives suited to her size, or, rather, her smallness, and her tricky, coaxing ways.

Nancie, deeply dejected—indeed, abject, in her despair—stood in a round, white tub of feathery soap-suds—all but one naughty foot, which had escaped over the edge, and sought terra-firma.

"And it's after escaping ye are, are ye, getting one leg out on the sloy? Ah now, would ye? not if Patrick Doolan knows it, begorra! He's up to the sly ways of ye. But it's all because ye don't know yourself rightly. Would ye go befront of the ladies all muck from top to tail? 'And whose dawg may that be?' they'd say, scornful-like, and what would ye be after feelin' when ye heard the people say, 'That's Swate Nancy, as belongs to the Honourable Dacre?' 'And who may his servant be?' they'd say. 'Why, who but Private Patrick Doolan, number tin company, as foine a soldier as you'll see in a day's march.' 'Bad cess to him!' they'd say at that; 'isn't he, now, the dirty spalpeen of a cratur to niglect the poor baste that way?' Oh yes, that's the way the purty ladies talk; haven't I heard them, many's the toime. And would ye be afther disgracin' me, and the honourable gntleman, my master,

by your shifty ways, an' yer gamesome tricks! Be still, ye varmint, can't ye now!"

For Nancie had got both her hind legs out of the soap-suds this time, and was wildly beating the air with her two front paws, like the perverse creature she was.

The scene was the yard of the officers' quarters; the time, a golden afternoon somewhat past its prime; and the interesting operation of washing and combing the dejected Nancie was watched by various soldier-servants, in various stages of rather scrappy attire; while Davenport, Major Paling's man, looked on calmly from the horse-block on which he was gracefully reclining, with Butcher—languid and indifferent to the world in general, more especially to that wretched little humbug in a white fluffy skin, and finished off so exactly alike at both ends that you couldn't tell its head from its tail—at his feet.

"Call that a dog, indeed!" Butcher's uplifted muzzle seemed to say. "Really, after that——"

Well, what he meant to say was, "After that the Deluge," though he didn't know how to put it, being only a dog.

Butcher never, under any circumstances, let on that he saw little Nancie. She would bark herself sideways; even go and "sit up" right in front of his face, snap at his stumpy tail, rush round him madly in a circle—all to no purpose. He would stalk serenely on, gazing apparently at the distant prospect with deep and absorbing interest, or turn three times round, give a long sigh, lie down with a heavy thud, yawn ostentatiously, and go to sleep—with one eye open.

"Sure now, and you're commencing to look worthy of the name ye bear," said Doolan, at last, wringing out bunches of the drowned white, silky hair. "She's a good-dispositioned dog enough is this," he added, turning to the recumbent Davenport; "but I can't get her to take a proper pride in herself."

"There isn't much of her to take pride in, anyhow," said that worthy, removing his pipe from between his teeth to make the observation, and replacing it with care, after using his little finger as a stopper.

There certainly wasn't when she was drenched with soap-suds, and then rinsed with warm water, and then rinsed with cold, till all her rose-pink skin showed between the dripping locks, and her eyes

bulged out of her head like black marbles. You could see that all her self-respect was gone; that she felt Butcher's contempt to be deserved, and longed to creep under any shelter that might present itself. But presently this stage came to an end, as all disagreeable things must, and the combing set in. But, before this, Nancie was set in the sun, and rubbed violently with a towel, so that gradually the fluffiness came back to her coat, and her eyes were hidden under a veil of feathery locks. At this she recovered her self-esteem, became playful and coquettish, sidled along towards Butcher, and sniffed at Davenport's legs.

"There's now for ye," said Doolan, in high delight, "you're takin' a proper pride in yourself as ye ought to. Walk yer chalks now, and lie down on the towel I've been after spreading in the sun, all com'ferble and coosy, and don't stir hand nor foot till I tell ye, or it 'ull be the worse for ye. Sure and it's fit ye are now to go among the best of the quality, and needn't be ashamed to tell yer name and rig'ment, nor the master as owns ye, to any as asks ye. If ye meet his Excoellency's honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, you've no occasions to cross over the other side the street; ye can just make straight for'ard, and show yourself to advantage, like the canty little cratur ye are. I'm prond o' ye, Nancie, my lass, and that's true, for ye—for ye look like a snowflake just fresh from the skof."

Nancie was quite as much aware as any Christian could have been that she was being praised, and pranked and preened herself, and wagged her newly-combed tail in the sunshine. She was a great favourite with the regiment generally, and much made of by the officers' servants, to the visible contempt and scorn of Butcher; so now the men in the yard gathered round the "Snowflake," and Nancie coquetted with them all, and enjoyed herself right royally.

Nancie had excelled herself in sitting up on end, and was just about to walk on her hind legs—"for all the world like a Christian," as Doolan put it—when all at once the group around her broke asunder, and confusion reigned where peace and light-heartedness had been but a moment before. A man, breathless, with heated face, and staring eyes, had rushed into the yard. A babel of tongues arose. Butcher, whose only notion of an uproar was that his master must be coming back, gave a loud yelp, and, with mighty bounds, made

for the gate; then, quivering in every sinewy limb, stood like a dog carved in stone, his head turned over his shoulder, his big, blood-shot eyes fixed on Davenport.

"What's the use of talking to those gibbering fools," that look seemed to say; "why can't you hurry up and unlock the doors to let him in?"

Butcher's world was peopled by a single inhabitant, filled with one image only. Any one, man, woman, or dog, is to be pitied who lives in a world like that.

Was it likely that such a fuss should be made over anything that wasn't the return of Major Sir Peyton Palling? And yet how grave they all look! Nobody is glad, nobody laughs. They speak in hushed voices; they gather round the one man who came in last; and he, with forage-cap fallen off, with white face and staring eyes, tells a sorry tale indeed.

Nancie is forgotten. Little Snowflake, all neglected, is painfully conscious of a lost popularity.

They are all talking about somebody called "Jack." You hear the name recurring at intervals, rising to the surface, as it were, upon a stream of babble.

"So poor old Jack's gone," says one, and passes his hand, arm and all, across his moustache, to hide a quiver of the lips it shadows.

"Ay, drowned—dead," says another.

"Old" is only a term of endearment, for Jack is—no, was—in the full vigour of his lusty youth, just past six-and-twenty, bright of eye, curly of head, the merriest, jolliest chap in the Grenadier Company. Why, what a singer he was! To hear him sing "Babylon is Fallen" made the blood leap and bubble in your veins. He could play on a penny whistle so that you seemed to be listening to two instruments at once. What would the "Soldiers' Evenings" be without Jack? What would the Grenadier Company be without Jack? What would Lieutenant the Honourable Dacre of that company say when he heard that Jack was "drowned dead"? And Captain Carbonel, 'nice news for him when he should return from leave!

Jack Morrison, the life and pet of the company—handsome "Corporal Jack"—tossing about in the harbour, drifted hither and thither by the stealthy, creeping tides, being sought for now by men in boats, men with great ghastly hooks and grave faces, searching the purple depths of the silent sea.

"The darned cramp took him all in a moment," said the new-comer, about whom all the others clustered. "He threw up his arms and gave a great shout. There's a bit of a still swirl by them rocks, and he wur gone before you could turn round. He went down like a darned stone; he never rose up once."

They had done all they could, of course they had; soldiers never stand at anything to help a comrade—even an unpopular one—and as for Jack. . . .

"Why, if the Captain himself had been there he'd have dived like a duck—clothes and all—so he would," said one.

There seemed a something on the minds of these men that each and all shrank from naming.

At last one did the trick.

He trailed the back of his hand over his mouth as if to clear away some obstacle to speech that bothered him—muttered an oath that meant nothing more than that his heart was touched, and his feelings deeply stirred—and put a rather singular question.

"How old is . . . Polly's last baby?"

"A matter of four days or so, I reckon," replied another.

Then they looked at each other, and shook their heads.

"Ah—the crathur!" said Doolan, slowly pulling love-locks of Nancie's milk-white hair out of the teeth of the cruel comb, and leaving it an open question whether he was speaking of Polly or the baby.

"A day's pay for Polly and the little one, man and man about," said Davenport, with the air of a grand seigneur, waving his pipe in a little circle to give due emphasis to the suggestion. "I can go bail for the rest of the Grenadiers."

"And I for number tin, safe and shure," said Doolan, while the man who had first mentioned Polly swore roundly as to what he hoped might befall him if he failed to bring himself and the men of his company up to the scratch "to help the darned kid."

Now, Polly was Jack's wife—no, Jack's widow—and she lay up at the "married quarters," outside the gate, and up over the glacis, with her four-days-old baby by her side, and a smile on her pale lips, ready to greet Jack when he should come home, which would surely, she thought, be before very long. He had gone for a bathe in the bright, blue, quiet sea. The kettle was singing on the little charcoal stove

outside the hut, and her neighbour, Mrs. O'Donovan—the kindest soul—had set the tea-cups on the tray, and cut bread-and-butter for two.

Of course, the men in the yard ever so far away knew nothing of all this. But one thing they did know.

Jack Morrison was "drowned dead," and his "girl" knew nothing about it—ergo, somebody must tell her. It wouldn't do to leave it too long, either, or some fool might rush up to the "quarters" and set the place in an uproar, with consequences to Polly and the "kid" which could only be darkly hinted at.

"We'd best go up and tell the por' lass gentle-like," said he who had first brought the evil news.

"Ay," said another; "let two on us go, and we best lose no time neither, for ill news, as the sayin' goes, travels fast, and never stops on the way. When they find the por' fellow they'll lay him on a stretcher, and some darned fool might meet him, and go and tell Polly suddint-like in what fashion her man was travelling up from the sea—him as stepped so blithe and merry down to't. Hurry, lads, hurry; and don't let the grass grow under your feet."

Two were to go; but there seemed no readiness to jostle one another as to who should undertake the job. The men nudged one another, and sidled away from the last comer—every one was of one mind in the matter of him being one of the fated two. Davenport, the dignified, made his way silently, and with drooping head, from the yard, Butcher following at his heels, also droopingly—as is the manner of dogs when they see their betters in low spirits. The others hung back, and, at last, Doolan, with the mingled bravery and kindness of his nation, volunteered to make the second of the messengers of woe.

"Shure and it's myself will break it to her—as holy Saint Patrick may give me the wit—and you'll be ready to say Amen, an' back me up in the first part of the pro-cading in all the lies I may tell. Shure the praste won't be after sayin' much to me over a lie or two tould in a good cause—it's a rale useful thing, mind you, is a snug bit of a lie now and again . . . glory be. . . ."

By this time the two men were well on their way to the "quarters," and, with each step they took, lower and lower sank their hearts even into the toes of their boots.

If it had come to a question of being fired into by the enemy, they would have stood like a rock; tramped on with fixed bayonets, though half-blind with blood and mire; carried a wounded comrade "bince-bancy," through a hail of bullets; done any grand, heroic deed you please, but—to go to Polly Morrison, with her four-day-old babe lying on her arm, and tell her that Jack was "drowned dead," and would never come back to kiss her sweet lips, and dandle the kid. . . .

That was quite another matter.

Besides, it would be a far easier task to go and tell any other soldier's wife than Polly Morrison. Polly was what the men called "superior." This is a quality in a woman which a community of men feel rather than that they can describe; and one that attracts soldiers mightily. I knew a woman once, plain enough to the eye, and what is called "well on in life," and yet many men in the regiment wanted to marry her. They said she was "like a lady," she "spoke so gentle, and walked with such an air." She was "superior" in their eyes, and they acknowledged, and did obeisance to that quality in her.

Well; Polly was "superior." Had she not been maid to Major Clutterbuck's children? Had she not wept her eyes out parting with Master Phil—King Baby was a sort of monarch in the eyes of the rank and file of the 193rd, as well as in those of his "officers"? Had not Master Jim run away ever so many times, and been captured in the huts by the new native handmaiden, and led home vehemently protesting? Did not the young ladies—Heaven bless their purty faces!—Miss Graham and Miss Lilian, think all the world of Polly, and give her the grand new dress to be married in; and hadn't Jack—Jack the handsome corporal—done all his courting at the Major's? Had not bold-faced-jig Master Jim said to him out and straight:

"Why do you sit and look at Polly—and why does Polly look at you? Doolan says you're a 'thafe.' Mr. Corporal, what's a 'thafe'?" And didn't the childer know right well what a "thafe" was when Polly was taken away, and that yellow-skinned Maltese wench set in her place!

And now, for these two men, Doolan and his companion, to have to go and tell pretty Polly that Jack was coming home, or rather going to the dead-house behind the hospital, on a stretcher!

The men's legs seemed to lag as they

made their way up the cindery, steep incline that led to the huts. Doolan was in plain clothes as became his position as an officer's servant, the other in the white tunic, red-striped trousers, and forage-cap of ordinary "duty."

"Shure an' it's me legs feel kind of wake, and me eyes has a dazzle in front of them," said poor Doolan, taking off his cap, and wiping his sweating brow. "Nancie"—for Nancie had followed the couple—"ye spalpeen o' the world, keep out o' the dust or I'll be after brainin' ye wid the kitchen poker when I get ye home."

This is the form that agitation takes with some people. They kick out and scold at whatever happens to be nearest. The other man consigned himself to endless woe—only another form of the same state of mind—and said he thought that hill grew steeper, and took more out of a man every day.

"Why the mischief," he said, "can't they build things on the flat in a climate like this?" Suddenly Doolan turned round and stopped short. "There's a sight as welcome as angels from heaven," he said, speaking under his breath, and staring hard at two ladies who were coming up the incline slowly, and in earnest conversation. A smart little pony-trap stood in the road below, and three fluffy, white dogs occupied the seat of honour within. Nancie gave a shrill yelp. She had a deadly hatred of her own kind.

"It's Captain Carbonel's lady, and the Meejor's daughter—the saints be praised," said Doolan; "now do you stand by and say nothing, while I do the parley-vooving, as they say in France. I'm used to the ways of the quality, having been a servant so long, an' I'll put it dacent and aisy, and Miss Graham she'll spake to poor Polly as gentle as a pigeon—glory be—"

So as the two ladies came on, the men stood aside and saluted, becoming absolutely rigid from head to heel as is the custom with such.

"If you please, miss," said Doolan, stepping forward, and again saluting the Major's daughter, "could I spake a word or two unbeknownst?"

Both ladies looked somewhat surprised, as was only natural; but Doolan and Nancie were well-known characters, and deserving of all attention.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Carbonel, alarmed at the expression of the man's face, "I

hope nothing has gone wrong with the Honourable . . . with Mr. Dacre!"

"In no wise, ma'm," said Doolan, beginning to shake a little, for he felt he was taking a bold step to say the least of it; "but I wish to break something to Miss Graham—Jack's gone. . . ." His voice broke on the last word—the word that meant so much.

"Jack?" said Miss Graham. "Do you mean Corporal Morrison—do you mean Polly's husband?"

"I mane Polly's husband—he's—drowned dead; and if you please, miss, we'll be afther being greatly indebted to you if you'll break it to her gently—same as I did to you—"

"Do you mean that you want me to go and tell Polly that her husband is . . . dead?"

"That's my maning, miss—and my comrade here is of the same way of thinking entoirely. We're of a mind that no one will tell her so pacable and make it so pleasant-like. You see the kid—Jack's kid—is but a matther of four days old . . . it comes kinder hard on the poor girl—put it how you will. . . ."

"Shall I go with you, dear?" said Mrs. Carbonel, catching her friend's hand.

"No, I will go alone," said Mabel, the colour fading from her face; "quite alone."

"Well, then, if you don't mind, I'll go back and sit in the carriage. Come to me there—and tell me—how—she—bears—it."

Mrs. Carbonel looked sick, and her voice shook. She had a husband whom she loved beyond all things else the world contained, and this man was away from her. What should she do, what should she do, if some one had to come to her and break it to her that Fred was—gone!

With slow steps she made her way down the hill. She had not a word for the three white, fluffy dogs. The groom thought his mistress was ill, for she leant forward, covering her face with her hand. Mrs. Carbonel was not ill; she was praying—praying with all her might and main for the poor soul—Jack Morrison's widow.

Meanwhile, Mabel, followed at a respectful distance by the two men, made her way to Polly's hut. It was a small place, indeed, to be all the home provided by a grateful country for the man who is ever ready to risk his life in her defence; but it was better than many. At all events,

they had it to themselves, and it was spick and span, and clean and cosy, divided all across by a neat chintz curtain, and with a few pretty flowering plants in the tiny square window.

"Is that you, Jack?" said a cheery voice, as Miss Graham entered the hut.

The voice came from the other side of the curtain, where Polly still lay, weak and white from her hour of trial, but blithe as a bird with its nestlings in the nest.

Mabel felt that this was a bad beginning. Her heart beat with a muffled thud, and she unfastened the silver clasp of her long, loose dust-cloak.

"No, Polly," she said, drawing back the curtain, "it is not—Jack—it is I."

"Oh, Miss Mabel," said Polly, who was sitting up in bed stitching, "how glad I am you've come! Sit down by me here while I talk to you a bit; Jack won't be home, maybe, yet. And there's something I want to say."

Mabel sat down in the space between the bed and the wall, where a chair was set, and, bending over, kissed Polly on the cheek. The girl started, and looked hard at her young mistress.

"How cold your lips are, Miss Mabel! Are you ill, my—my dear?"

"No, no," said Mabel, throwing off her cloak. "But the day has been close and hot."

"You frightened me," said Polly; "I thought maybe the master was worse"—the Major was always the master to Polly. "But I might have known, for Dr. Musters told me that he was better; and, oh, Miss Mabel, he said I could get up to-morrow. Ain't that good news for me? I never was so bad, nor lay so long before; and though Jack's good and patient, I reckon it frets him not to have me handy to see to things. Mrs. Doolan's been in and set the tea—two cups, and bread-and-butter to match; for there's only two on us just now—me and my man. Mrs. McCartney came and carried off little Joe, willy-nilly as they say. We're only poor folk, we soldiers' wives; but we're mighty kind to one another in the hour of need. Well, well, how I do run on! That's what Jack says—there never was such a wench for talking. Now, Miss Mabel, I'll tell you the secret that was made up by Jack and me. It's a bold kind of a secret, and he said himself as you might take it we were makin' too free. But it's just this: we'd be as proud

as proud if you'd stand for the little un."

Polly drew down the light patchwork coverlet, and there lay the tiny head, with its scanty covering of silk-soft hair—Polly's "new baby." Mabel began to think that if she had known how difficult things would have been, she would never have undertaken so hard a task. Her very heart seemed to fail within her; she was conscious of a cowardice altogether humiliating; a longing for flight of which she was heartily ashamed. But there was a faint rustling in the outer room, a faint sound as of stealthy steps, and she knew that Doolan and his companion were sitting in judgment on her proceedings.

Besides, she had promised to do this thing; she must not fail from her word.

Polly heard the rustling too.

"Happen it's Jack," she said, listening. Then, with a smile: "He's given to tricks sometimes, Miss Mabel, is Jack. He came peeking round the curtain, and laughing ever so sly, when he got in from roll-call."

Then Mabel took her courage by both hands.

She took the girl in her arms, and held her close and fast.

"Polly," she said, "there is a roll-call—Heaven's roll-call—which we must all answer one day. Polly—Polly—Jack's name has been called; he has gone to answer it."

Polly pushed away the restraining arms with a vehement, passionate gesture, stared wildly into her mistress's face, and read there, in the wet eyes and trembling lips, the bitter, cruel truth.

For a moment the two were absolutely motionless. Then Polly spoke; her voice a hoarse, strained whisper.

"Is he dead? Will he never come no more—never no more—never no more?" And before Mabel could answer a word, a bitter, wailing cry rang out—a cry that once heard lingered on the stricken ear—"Oh, Jack—Jack, will you never come no more?"

Too much sentiment, says some one, about a common soldier's wife.

It may be so; but I am telling the plain, unvarnished truth; telling of things that really happened; only the man was killed—suddenly and in a moment—not drowned.

I myself was the unlucky wight who undertook to tell the bereaved wife; I

myself suffered that overpowering impulse to fly—even to the uttermost parts of the earth—rather than face the task I had pledged myself to; I myself saw the fatherless little ones clinging to the mother's gown; heard that exceeding bitter cry—"Oh, Jack—Jack, will you never come no more!"

It is no use to fancy this or that of people as a class. Women's hearts are the same all the world over. David's lament over his princely son; Duncan's cry for the loss of all his "pretty ones;" these echo on through all the ages, and thrill all hearts, from the highest to the lowest, the richest to the poorest. As we all die the common death, so we live the common life, and love the common love. It may be we do all these things "with a difference;" but it is the same life, the same love, the same death, and among those who live, and love, and suffer, and die, none are "common or unclean," for all are Heaven's.

To the care of loving hands, the solace of loving, if humble sympathisers, Mabel left poor Polly at last. As she passed through the outer room, and caught sight of the bright-coloured tea-tray, set out with its two pretty tea-cups, she felt how deep might be the pathos of the most commonplace things. Poor little tea-tray laid out so neat and taut for Jack who would "never come no more!" Poor little kettle singing away on the charcoal stove as merrily as if nothing had happened!

Oh, the unutterable sadness of the little things in life! They are harder, far harder to bear than the heavy burdens. Mabel suggested to Mrs. Doolan, who was keening a dreadful sort of coronach outside, surrounded by a little crowd, that a less noisy form of sympathy might be more acceptable to poor Polly, and then went slowly down the hill.

"Come back with me for a rest," said Mrs. Carbonel; "and then I will drive you home myself." She was frightened at the fixed, white look of the girl's face.

"How she takes things to heart!" she thought. But she did not ask how Mrs. Morrison took the news of "Jack's" death. It is given to some women to know when healing lies in silence, and of these, Fred Carbonel's wife was one.

But once in the sanctuary of Mrs. Carbonel's pretty room, they spoke of the young widow and her sorrow.

"Do you know," said Mabel, "the only

thing that seemed to give her any comfort—any help at all!"

"What was it?"

"Just this—'there's the childer to think of.'"

"I can fancy that," said Mrs. Carbonel, with a catch in her breath.

"She said it over and over again—over and over again—'there's the childer to think of, I must try to bear up—because of the childer——'"

"How sad it all is!" said Mrs. Carbonel.

"Yes; but I am glad I was there—I am glad we went to the huts to-day. It will be something to think of for a long, long time to come."

It was natural enough that Mabel should feel for poor Polly in her desolation; but there was something about the girl that Mrs. Carbonel could not understand or fathom. Her face was set and pallid even to the lips; her eyes shone with a strange fixed light. Paintings of martyrs to the cause of Christ have been limned with such pallor and such radiance.

Both the women were very silent during the drive to Sleima. Each understood the other by this time too well to be garrulous. At last, alone in her own little room, Mabel could give her thoughts free fling. She was like Polly—poor Polly to whom Jack would come back "never no more." For Charley—her brave, bonnie soldier-love—he, too, would "never come back no more," never as he had come; never with the love-light in his honest eyes, and the smile on his lip; never to clasp her in his strong arms, and kiss her close and long—never to draw her head down to the dear pillow of his breast—never to call her his "little sweetheart," any more. . . .

The cry of Polly's desolation had seemed as the cry of her own heart.

She, too, might ask fate with tears and sighings—"Will he never come no more!"

She, too—how the thought in its intensity pierced like a knife—might strengthen her own weakness by remembering "the childer," the little helpless ones, the little souls that are Heaven-given. "There are the childer to think of."

Dear good Polly to have taught her that.

She in her turn—oh hard and bitter lesson!—must teach those words to Charley.

"Tap, tap, tap," comes a little, soft, open palm upon the door, and then,

without being further bidden, enter King Baby.

"Wants to tum in," says little Phil; "wants to see zoo—wants to sit upon your knee and be loved a bit—take me up."

Phil is followed by Jim and Algie, Bertie bringing up the rear.

"We've missed you all the time," says Bertie, "and they told us you had gone to see Polly—"

"Did you go to see Polly?" says Jim, taking up a determined attitude. "Did they tell you that Corporal Jack's drowned? Pap says we've lost one of the best soldiers in the regiment; he says the O. O. will tear his hair. Do you think he will?"

"Drownéd in the biggey sea," says Algie; then he adds, as if to elucidate the whole matter more thoroughly: "Like a fish."

"Fishes don't get drowned," says Jim, with crushing superiority. "Algie, you are nothing but a foolish child."

Bertie says nothing.

He has drawn quite close to Sister Mabel, and is looking at her very, very earnestly. Is sister so sorry about Corporal Jack, and Polly, and the baby, that she looks like that; or—is something else the matter, too?

"Mabel," he says, at last, "are you very sorry about something, dear?"

At this she bursts into such a passion of weeping as frightens them almost out of their young wits; and it is characteristic of Bertie, that he shuts the door close before he helps the rest to comfort her.

Between her sobs she asks them if they all love her very much; at which they all begin to talk at once, and to cling to what they can each get of her—to make, in fact, what Jim calls a "family pie." In fact, they squeeze Phil so hard, that he, too, begins to cry; at which every one quiets down, and sets to work to pacify outraged majesty; and Jim brings out a pocket-handkerchief—a pocket-handkerchief which surely has been used to clean all the pots and pans in the establishment!—and tries to wipe away sister Mabel's tears; at which they all laugh. And the atmosphere becomes quite April-like.

When they are gone—and they are not long in going, now that they know sister is safe home again, for a sea-bird they keep in the little back court is indisposed, and requires the closest attention as to food—Mabel falls upon her knees by the bed.

"Polly, Polly," she murmurs, "you were quite, quite right—"there are the childer to think of"; we must never forget that, any of us—never."

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CHAPTER XIV.

FOR two or three days after the first night of the new piece the same heavy weight of depression seemed to hang upon Selma. It was only while she was actually acting that she seemed to throw it off, forgetting everything in her absorption in her part. Directly she was off the stage, with the applause she had won still ringing through the theatre, the fire would die out of her face, the weary listlessness would creep over her again, and she seemed to care for nothing, to be interested in nothing.

But gradually—at first as it seemed with a resolute effort of self-compulsion—she turned to her work again. She found faults in her rendering of her part which she thought she could mend, and applied herself steadily to the process. She studied indefatigably for Tyrrell, who still continued, at her own desire, to coach her in various ways.

"You don't give me nearly enough to do," she said to him one day as they stood together in his study after one of what she still continued to call her "lessons."

He laughed, and studied her earnest face curiously as he told her she was insatiable; and after he had seen her into her cab he stood looking out of his window for a moment with a rather cynical expression.

"What difference does she think it will make in another year?" he said to him-

self. "She has only to play her cards now, and, study or no study, London will be at her feet."

But whatever difference it might or might not make in another year, it apparently made all the difference to Selma now. With every day in which she settled more steadily into her old routine of study, with every night in which her part became to her less an exciting event and more an important piece of her day's work, her depression lessened, and her quiet, even spirits returned to her more and more.

The foggy, November days ran out, and when Christmas came there were very few more weeks left to the two sisters of their quiet life together. Mr. Forsyth's appreciation of Humphrey Cornish's picture the year before had been the first of a series of successes, not striking or electrifying, but very steady and of the best kind, which had made the name of the latter known among artists, and even to the public, as the name of a promising man. It had also been the first of a series of sales of various pictures which had entirely altered his financial position, and had made it possible for him to think of marrying. He and Helen had had many quiet talks on the subject; but when it was finally decided that they need wait no longer, there was one point on which they came individually to the same conclusion—different as the process of reasoning must have been in each case—with no words on the subject. Each felt, though neither said, that their wedding could hardly fail to be a painful reminder to every one—a most painful reminder to Selma—of the wedding so eagerly prepared for which had never come off, and it was understood between them that it could not be accomplished too quietly, or with too little show of preparation. The date

had been a difficulty. It was obviously impossible that anything so likely to be painful to Selma should take place while she was preparing for her first appearance. Humphrey and Helen alike tacitly avoided the months of December and January in discussing possibilities, and yet it seemed unnecessary to wait until after Lent, when, as Helen thought to herself, there might possibly be another "first night." Finally they decided upon the first of February; and Helen, anxious above all things that no detail of the arrangements should remain to be discussed after Selma was told of them, brought herself to go and see Miss Tyrrell privately, that she might ask her to "take care" of her sister while she herself should be away on her honeymoon.

Selma had known ever since midsummer that the wedding was likely to take place in the course of the winter; and when, about a month after her first appearance, Helen told her, in a quiet, matter-of-fact way, the date decided on, she received the news with a loving kiss, but with no disturbance of her serenity. She was, of course, to live with them. Helen's marriage brought with it no parting between the sisters, no greater wrench for Selma than is involved in moving from one house to another. Humphrey's familiar presence in the house would have made little difference in her daily life, even if she had had much life outside her own profession; absorbed as she was in her work, no external circumstances seemed greatly to affect her. And in the choosing of the house—accomplished as quietly as were all Helen's private preparations—next to Humphrey's requirements in the matter of a studio, as the simplest matter of course, Selma's convenience and tastes had been considered by her sister.

It was an afternoon in the third week in January, and Selma was alone in the house. She was going later on to the Tyrrells', for what Miss Tyrrell called "a little tea-party"—a form of entertainment to which that lady was much addicted during the mid-winter months, and which had been denied her this winter, together with every other form of society. Miss Tyrrell had been ill, and such an inartistic and ill-calculated proceeding had annoyed her very much indeed. It had annoyed her brother, too, very considerably. As soon as she considered herself quite recovered, they had a short conversation together, of which Selma was the subject,

and of which the little tea-party in question was the immediate result.

"You know that anything I can do to help our dear young artist along the road to fame I will do joyfully. I will ask the dear Duchess for the twenty-first," were the words with which Miss Tyrrell had concluded the interview; and the smile on John Tyrrell's face as he left her could only be described as sardonic.

"She really believes in it all!" he said to himself. "What won't habit do for a woman!"

No man in London knew more accurately than John Tyrrell the exact value of a calling acquaintance with a duchess; no man deceived himself less as to the exact value of the phrases of the "set" in which he lived.

Helen, who found it far from easy to keep all the inevitable business connected with her wedding to the morning hours during which Selma worked, had taken the opportunity afforded by her sister's engagement with Miss Tyrrell to go on a shopping expedition with Humphrey, who was only to be dragged from his studio in the afternoon; and Selma, who was never idle now, was spending the half-hour which remained before she need start for her "little tea-party" practising singing. Tyrrell had sent her to a singing-master, with a smile at his own inability to satisfy her demand for employment, and an assurance that she could not cultivate her voice too carefully.

She was singing scales and exercises intently, and with the same steadiness which characterised all her work, when the door behind her opened suddenly, and Mervyn Dallas's warm, eager arms were clasped impulsively round her neck.

"I heard you singing, dearest," she said, apologetically, "and I thought I might come up, though it was exercises!"

Mervyn's speech was always too rapid and demonstrative to be remarkable for grammar or for coherency; but Selma understood her, and smiled forgiveness for the interruption as she kissed her.

"Where have you been, Mervyn?" she said. "We haven't seen you for a week."

On Selma's return to London in the preceding spring, Mervyn Dallas, without saying a word on the subject to any one, had rushed headlong off to Miss Tyrrell's, and had flung herself into Selma's arms with kisses and tears—tears of pleasure at the sight of her, as she elaborately explained—

and floods of quaint, incoherent eloquence directly expressive of her delight in her return, and indirectly, but far more plainly, expressive of the love and loyalty with which her faithful little heart was overflowing; and Selma, so taken by surprise at first as almost to lose her self-control, had been very gentle, almost grateful in her manner, and had since taken a tender pleasure in her constant adorer which was very different from the pretty, kindly patronage she had extended to her before.

"I didn't a bit expect to find you this afternoon," Mervyn said now, apparently in answer to Selma's question, though the reply could hardly be considered strictly relevant. "I was so dreadfully afraid you would be out. Selma, don't shut the piano. Sing to me."

Selma smiled as she shut the piano, and came to sit down by the fire.

"Exercises, Mervyn? I hardly know any songs."

"How hard you work, Selma," returned Mervyn, who had established herself on a small chair, which was her particular favourite, looking up at the other with loving, admiring eyes. "No other girl would think she needed work any more. Whenever I meet fresh people I always make them talk about 'Fedalma'—" "Fedalma" was the name of the play in which Selma was acting—"and I feel as if I must just kiss them when they begin about you. They always say you're perfect, and I could talk to them for hours. I had a perfect time at a dance the other night; I sat on the stairs for half an hour with a heavenly man. He talked about you incessantly."

Selma laughed a low, amused laugh at her fervour.

"You'll become a nuisance to your fellow-creatures, Mervie," she said.

"You don't know anything about it," answered Mervyn, with a quaint little grimace. "You don't even know what you are like as Fedalma, or you wouldn't think you could make yourself a bit better."

She had drawn her chair round, so that she was very close to Selma, looking up in her face; and the latter took one of the little, restless, brown hands in hers and played with it absently.

"Fedalma isn't everything, don't you see, Mervyn," she said, dreamily. "I never shall get even that quite right; if I did, it would only show that it wasn't

worth doing, because the thing one can get quite perfect isn't art at all, I think. But Fedalma is only—there isn't much in it, after all."

"Why, every one says what a lovely part it is. Don't you like it, Selma?"

"I like it—oh yes, I'm very fond of it, and very happy with it. But, don't you see, it's only for a time; there's always more to come. Fedalma is only just a part; there isn't genius behind it. Think of the great parts, Mervie—the parts with a whole woman, a whole life in them. Those are what one has to work for all one's life; and they—they are all means to an end, Mervyn. It's what lies beyond it all—all the work, and everything—that makes it so infinitely worth while."

There was a little quiver of intense purpose and devotion in her low voice; but her cheeks did not flush as they had been used to do in her old moods of youthful enthusiasm. Only her eyes were very deep and steadfast, and Mervyn bent her face suddenly and kissed the hand she held. There was a little silence, and then Mervyn sprang up, with rather suspicious briskness, quick as her movements always were.

"Where is Helen gone?" she said, as she wandered erratically about the room to see, as she would have expressed it, "whether anything had happened" since she had been there last; and the next moment she was calling herself by every violent and opprobrious name she could think of for having spoken without thinking, for Selma answered, quietly:

"She is out with Humphrey."

Mervyn Dallas was certainly not cut out for a conspirator. Having fallen upon the very last topic on which she wished to talk to Selma, dreadfully afraid of saying anything that would be painful to her, she became entirely unable to extricate herself from the position by finding anything else to say, and after a moment's embarrassed silence—embarrassed on Mervyn's part that is to say—Selma said very low, but quite steadily:

"Mervyn, will you do something for me?"

Immensely relieved, thinking that all her difficulty was over, Mervyn flew impetuously across the room to her.

"Dearest, this instant—anything," she exclaimed. A little wan smile just touched Selma's lips, and she bent her head so that Mervyn should not see her face. "It isn't this instant, Mervyn," she

said; "and don't promise until you hear what it is. It's—a message."

There was a moment's pause, and Mervyn said, questioningly:

"Yes, dear!"

"Mervyn, will you tell—them—that I shall not go—to see Nell—married!"

Selma turned away as she spoke, and stood looking out of the window with her back to Mervyn, who remained where she was, gazing at her with an expression of misery and humiliation, as though it were she herself who had just expressed her knowledge of the fact that there were people in the world who would actively object to meeting her. She knew well enough of whom Selma had spoken—whom she was to tell. She knew that the question as to whether or no Selma would go to the church had been privately discussed in the Cornish family; she herself had argued hotly on the subject with Sylvia, who, with all the unpardoning severity of youth, had declared that if Selma went she should not. Her colour came and went, she rolled her pocket-handkerchief into an incredibly small ball, and a lump kept rising in her throat which would not let her speak—not that it would have occurred to her to dispute a decision of Selma's in any case. But Selma did not move, something in her motionlessness kept Mervyn from the demonstration which would have been natural to her, and at last she forced herself to say, in a voice that was hardly audible:

"Yes, Selma."

There was another instant's pause, and then Selma turned round, rather white, but quite quiet.

"Thank you, dear," she said, gently.

Selma was rather late in arriving at the Tyrrells'. Several carriages were waiting in the neighbourhood of the house, and as the drawing-room door opened for her, it seemed to her, seeing the "tea-party" in its fully assembled state, that it was considerably larger than she had expected. She stood for a moment just inside the door, not seeing Miss Tyrrell. Then that lady, quite aware that the attention of the eight or ten people in the room was by that time concentrated more or less openly on the new comer, rose from the low chair at the extreme end of the room, where she had been sitting, and Selma moved down the long room with the swift, graceful walk which was so characteristic of her.

"Late, of course," said Miss Tyrrell with

an indulgent smile as she received her, while a pretty girl at the other end of the room observed to the man who was holding her tea-cup: "That was a very excellent entrance, wasn't it! She has improved immensely since last season."

Miss Tyrrell herself was always in perfect harmony with her own drawing-room, and was as distinctly part of its general effect as any one of its inanimate artistic details. She knew exactly the position she occupied in the picture as she stood there holding Selma's hand in hers, and she knew, too, the impression which Selma was making; and she kept her standing, retaining her hand, as she asked her several wholly unnecessary questions as to her general well-being with much tender interest.

"I should have been very angry with you if you had been a little later," she said, when it seemed to her that the tableau had lasted long enough; and though her smile was suavity itself, there was a literal truth about her words which was by no means characteristic of all Miss Tyrrell's observations. "The Duchess has only a few moments, and she wishes to be introduced to you." She turned to the elderly lady on whom she had been bestowing her most artistic attention when Selma entered the room—the elderly lady who had taken so deep an interest in the reported romance surrounding Selma on her first appearance as a reciter—and laying a long, caressing hand on the girl's arm, she drew her forward, and said, "May I introduce Miss Selma Malet, my dear Duchess? Selma, dearest, the Duchess of Ridsdale."

Selma was taken by surprise—as Miss Tyrrell had fully intended that she should be. She had not been prepared for duchesses at a "little tea-party" in the first place, and looking quickly round the room as she took the seat pointed out to her by Miss Tyrrell—a seat which condemned her to conversation with the Duchess—she saw that all the people in the room were strangers to her. She was vaguely wishing that Miss Tyrrell would not ask her when she had "people," when the voice of the Duchess recalled her to herself.

"I am very pleased to have the opportunity of telling you how charmed we have been with your performance of Fedalma, Miss Malet."

Selma turned at once, courteously, and with a pretty little deprecating movement

of her head, which was instinctive to her, but with perfect self-possession, and found that she was being looked over with much the same condescending curiosity with which she herself might have inspected some remarkable, but very inferior, member of the animal kingdom asserted by science to be allied to man, and, consequently, of the same race as herself.

"It is very kind of you to tell me so," she said.

"Quite charmed, really," repeated the Duchess, whose laudatory vocabulary was not extensive. "The white gown you wear in the second act is quite perfect, if I may tell you so."

"I am very glad you like it," said Selma, with a little, irrepresible smile.

"My daughter, Lady Fenton, is most anxious to know what the material can be. It isn't silk, I think!"

"It is an Indian stuff of some kind. Miss Tyrrell chose it."

"Then Miss Tyrrell can no doubt tell me where to get it! You must find it a most affecting part to play!"

Selma was rather desperately casting about in her mind for a possible answer to such a question, when, to her infinite relief, the Duchess, unanswerd, rose.

"I am so charmed to have met you, and so sorry to run away," she said. "I have a little scheme on foot, which Mr. Tyrrell has kindly undertaken to propound to you," offering her hand to Selma with the utmost graciousness. "It is a scheme in which I am deeply interested, and I hope he may be able to enlist your sympathy, Miss Malet. I hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you in Park Lane; I shall send you a card— Ah, Mr. Tyrrell!" she added, as they were joined by their host, "I must run away, unfortunately. You will talk to Miss Malet!"

John Tyrrell had been watching Selma's face from the end of the room. He had thought, cynically enough, that his sister was making a false move in leaving the two alone together; and he had finally sauntered across the room to prevent that frustration of his plans which he saw was imminent. He shook hands with Selma, undertook to the Duchess to explain everything, and finally escorted that lady downstairs. Selma had been introduced to two men and another elderly and distinguished lady by the time he came back, and her expressive face looked little happier than it had done during her brief audience with

the Duchess. He did not go to the rescue a second time, however, but crossed to the pretty girl who had commented on Selma's entrance—Nora Glynn.

"Mayn't I get you another cup of tea?" he said.

"You may not, Mr. Tyrrell," she answered; "but you may introduce me to Miss Malet. How much she has improved!"

Nora Glynn herself had not improved. She had hardened curiously in face, voice, and manner. She was exactly what she had been a year before; but she no longer suggested any possibility of further development.

"I am very glad you think so," Tyrrell answered her, gravely; "and I shall be delighted to introduce you. Ah! the Winalows are going. Will you come with me now?"

Miss Nora Glynn gave him a little look, as if to ask him why he did not bring Miss Malet to her; but he piloted her calmly across the room to where Selma was standing alone.

"Selma," he said, "I want to introduce a sister-artist: Miss Nora Glynn—Miss Malet."

"I'm so delighted to meet you," said the sister-artist, with enthusiasm, which did not, however, prevent her from forming the mental comment: "She wants colour, awfully." "Do let us sit down together and have a little chat."

"I shall be very pleased," said Selma, looking down into the pretty little well-satisfied face in some surprise.

She had seen Nora Glynn on the stage; but she had never considered her personality at all, and now that she met it she felt curiously out of her element in the connection. But before Nora Glynn's proposal could be carried into effect, and very much to her annoyance— for she was really curious to "see what the girl was like," as she would have expressed it—one of the two men with whom Selma had been talking when Tyrrell had re-entered the room after disposing of the Duchess, and who were the only other guests now remaining, came up behind her, and said, lightly:

"You and Miss Malet are not going to monopolise one another, Miss Glynn, I hope. Tyrrell," turning to his host, "this won't do, you know, at all."

"Not at all," returned Tyrrell, promptly, dexterously covering Selma's movement as she turned rather haughtily away. She had taken a strong dislike to the first

speaker, an elderly man, of an extremely complimentary turn of mind, and she had no appreciation whatever of his position in society. "Let there be no monopolies, Miss Nora, but a common fund of sociability," continued Tyrrell, gaily.

He turned round a chair for her as he spoke, and as she seated herself with a bewitching little pout at him, the second of the two remaining men, who had as yet said little, but had looked a good deal at Selma, observed :

"What is the Duchess's latest, Tyrrell ? I suppose it is public property. She seemed to be talking about it indiscriminately enough."

He was a man of about thirty-five, with keen, clear-cut features, a good forehead, a mouth hidden by a dark moustache ; his name was Julian Heriot, and he was an influential critic, and a literary man of whom much was expected by those who knew him only by his clever, sarcastic stories and papers. But Tyrrell, who knew him better than most people, had once observed, in a most unusual moment of confidence to a mutual friend, that "Heriot was distinctly a man of his day, and his day was not the day of great achievements."

He turned to him on his question, and answered :

"It is public property, decidedly ; indeed, I shall be glad to hear what you have to say to it, Heriot."

Then, throwing himself into a chair, and crossing his legs, he began gravely, addressing the company generally :

"The Duchess is immensely interested in the schemes afloat for the relief of the sufferings caused in China by the late floods, of which the papers have been full. She is most anxious to get up a fund on her own account."

"She has the very kindest heart," murmured Miss Tyrrell, who had subsided into a chair, looking rather worn out ; but who, having been really and uninterestingly ill, would have died rather than own to fatigue.

"She proposes that I should get up a benefit *matinée* to this end," pursued Tyrrell, passing over the interruption, and apparently entirely innocent of the sarcasm his words contained, "and that she should give her name as president of a committee who should work it at—benefit prices."

"Does she propose to give anything beside her name?" enquired Julian Heriot, quietly.

Tyrrell looked at him without moving a muscle of his face, and replied :

"She will give her very valuable time, and she will give the committee."

"And what do you think of the scheme ? Do you see your way ?"

"Yes," returned Tyrrell, with the same impenetrable frank composure ; "I am deeply interested in—the Chinese, and I shall be delighted to help the Duchess. Now her Grace has unusually definite views on the subject of this *matinée*"—Tyrrell did not think it necessary to announce that the views in question had been provided by himself—"Miss Glynn and Miss Malet," looking from one girl to the other with a smile, "she is anxious for help from both of you."

Nora Glynn smiled back at him, trying not to look as elated as she felt, with a pretty little gesture, which signified that she would be gracious to the Duchess ; and Selma leant suddenly forward, with a little flush of colour in her cheeks.

"Oh," she said, "I shall love to help. I was reading about it yesterday—China I mean—and it is so dreadful. Can we really do any good do you think ?"

There was an instant's pause as the five other people present looked at her with one accord—the men in covert admiration of the added loveliness the flush had brought her, Nora Glynn, in open-eyed astonishment, and Miss Tyrrell with hardly concealed impatience. Then Tyrrell, the first to recover himself, said, quietly :

"We can but try, at any rate. Then I may count upon you, Selma !"

"Of course," she answered, with a quiet smile at him. And then, carried out of her usual quiet by the sudden thought, she exclaimed, with something of her old impulsiveness : "Why, it will be a new part ! Oh, how lovely !"

The next instant, as she caught Julian Heriot's eyes, she saw the smile which he could not quite repress, and flushed more hotly and more beautifully than ever.

"That is all right, then," said Tyrrell.

"Now Heriot, as we are all interested in the question—the Duchess told me you had promised to help her, Lord Ellingham," with a glance at the elder man, "I should like to know what you both think about the committee. I promised to draw up a provisional list."

A very eager discussion ensued in which Selma alone took no part, knowing nothing of the respective merits as social powers of the ladies in question, and being quite

happy to sit and think over the possibilities of the new part in prospect. She was passing from one dreamy speculation into another, when Julian Heriot's rather metallic voice caught her ear.

"Lady Latter," he was saying, "you'd better have her, Tyrrell. You and she are still on speaking terms, are you not?"

There was a slight pause, presumably while Tyrrell weighed Lady Latter in the scale as he had weighed her predecessors on the list. Then he said, slowly and deliberately:

"Lady Latter! Of course! We are—very good friends! Lady Latter by all means."

Then Selma's attention wandered away again, and she was still dreaming, when the discussion was finally adjourned to a future occasion, and Miss Tyrrell's "little tea-party" dispersed.

TOURNAMENTS, NEW AND OLD.

WHEN Tournaments began there is no direct evidence to show; but the first on record was held in the year in which the Battle of Hastings was fought. It is from gay Provence, with its memories of the amphitheatre, and the games of the arena, that we get the word itself, which seems to refer to the turning of the Knights at the end of the course, when they took opposite sides of the barriers for the next, thus equalising any natural advantages of the ground. It was not till the days of the Plantagenets that the Tournament became an established institution in England, and then, from the thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, there is a tolerably regular succession of these military festivals. But in these modern days, no one thought much about Tournaments till Walter Scott reproduced the scene of his famous gathering at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, with such admirable descriptive effect that admirers of Rebecca and Rowena, of the disinherited Knight, of the Templar, and of the jovial Cœur de Lion, began to be all agog about Tournaments.

It was the revived interest in chivalry and in feudal pomp and ceremony that led the Earl of Eglinton, in the year 1839, to attempt his celebrated and much ridiculed modern Tournament, which may be said to have perished in a Scotch mist, but which brought together, anyhow, two characters to be eventually famous:

Benjamin Disraeli, and the late Emperor of the French, then a discredited adventurer known as Louis Napoleon. But though the name of Tournament attached itself to many contests of one kind or another, as Boileau writes—

Sur un table long et façonné exprès
D'un tournoi de Bassette ordonner les apprêts.

And as so we have chess Tournaments, not inappropriately named for such combats of mimic war, billiard Tournaments, and even fishing Tournaments, yet, in its real character of military festival and display, there has been nothing since the days of chivalry to rival the grand Military Tournament of which the twelfth has of late been celebrated.

Never, in its merriest days, was Islington more gay than when the Military Tournament is in progress at the Agricultural Hall. If there is no general holiday proclaimed by heralds and pursuivants-at-arms, there surely ought to be, in view of the paramount attractions of the great annual military display. And the boys and girls of the neighbourhood must take it for granted that something of the kind is intended, judging by the way in which they hang over the railings and cluster on the raised causeways, and shout and cheer on the very smallest provocation. What delightful glimpses, too, are to be had of camp and bivouac in the roomy annexes about the great hall; what coming and going of mounted detachments and military parties! Now it is a team of Horse Artillery, arriving with all the dash of that splendid corps, the gun and its belongings all shining like some beautiful toy, but rumbling past with thundering cadence, dimly suggestive of the roar of battle. Again, an omnibus, crammed inside and out with redcoats, dashes up to the entrance. Volunteers in sober grey; the bright uniforms of Yeomanry from distant counties diversify the scene. Machine guns rattle past, and a pontoon train almost blocks the street with arks like that of Noah, but without doors and windows, and with scarlet-coated engineers replacing the animal inmates.

What glimpses are to be had of the lively military life that is going on within; the camp, the bivouac, horses champing their oats and rattling their halter chains; men at work in the loosest of stable dress; gymnasts all in white; swordsmen trying their weapons; lances, with bright pennons, stacked here and there; short serjeant-

majors, their hands full of reports and states, their mouths full of reproaches, all bustling about and wiring in generally!

Then, when the business is fairly launched, to see the crowds that come thronging to the various entrances! What ranks upon ranks of carriages; Royalties, with escorts and military honours; duchesses and millionaires, with equipages and powdered footmen; the City, with its magnates; the country, with its squires and fair dames, and tall, well-grown girls; the general rush of all sorts and conditions of men, and of women, too—aye, and of children, too, for something of the courtesy of ancient chivalry seems to prevail at our modern Tournament, and among the crowds that throng the barriers, the youngsters fearlessly elbow their way, are hoisted on people's shoulders, find resting-places in the arms of tall grenadiers, and shout or squeal when the firing begins, according to sex or temperament!

But it is not mere pageantry that is meant, but serious business; and, at the word, forth dashes a horseman to ride his course, with point and cut to left and right, while so many dummy heads roll in the dust, and each scoundrel of a post receives a thrust between the eyes. All this is in the spirit of the good old Tournament. Bois Gilbert, the Templar Knight, would be as keenly interested in the contest as we are; and the Tilting at the Ring would be an equal source of interest to the grim, armour-clad Knight, could he obtain a day's liberty from the gloomy shades. "Good lance!" "Good sword!" would be the cry of the ghostly chivalry. For, in clever horsemanship and dexterous fingering of sword and lance, it would be hard to beat our modern paladins, whether of the good old national force of Yeomanry, or Mounted Rifles, or of the regular cavalry. "Sword against Lance," too, would leave still unsettled the question of the superiority of either weapon, which was equally an open question when it was debated between the flashing scimitars of the Saracens, and the sturdy lances of the Crusading Knights.

There is Tent-Pegging, too, about which the Templar Knight may be heard to murmur, that he had seen that kind of thing at Acre and Ascalon; that those Arab fellows were good at it; but that your good English champion when he ran a tilt would have something more solid for his object—say, the root of an oak, or the stump of a pine-tree. But, subject to this

doubtful evidence, the sport seems to have had an Indian origin, and began with the Bengal Cavalry, as a means of giving confidence in the saddle, a firm seat, and correct hand and eye. With body bent down to the right, and lance held almost close to the ground, the peg will come if it is properly struck; and loud are the cheers that greet the successful cavalier who bears it off on the point of his lance, and, wheeling gracefully round, presents it to the attendants of the arena.

Yet when it comes to a contest between a mere insignificant foot-soldier, without ammunition, and with only rifle and bayonet to defend himself against a dashing lancer, it is something of a surprise to the veterans of old time to see that the infantry man has nothing the worst of the encounter. After all, a pair of stout legs form a better fighting platform for the owner of them than the back of a horse, which, being a nervous animal, has an invincible dislike of cold steel. Everybody knows that the best of cavalry is powerless against infantry in formation; but it is encouraging for the poor foot-soldier to see demonstrated that if he has mastered the use of the national weapon he may face the most dashing hussar, with a fair chance of success in the encounter. And with a cartridge or two still left in his pouch, the odds would be considerably in his favour.

There is nothing better in the show than the sight of the Royal Horse Artillery as they issue at full trot from the castle gate; each of the six horses shining like satin, all the traces drawing, and the bright harness jingling. People hold their breath as the gallant team goes by, for it seems a feat quite beyond accomplishment for the drivers who ride and drive postillion fashion, to work that team and that gun between the posts that seem hardly wide enough apart for a wheelbarrow to get through, and between pegs which are still closer together than the posts. It would not be so difficult to drive a coach round, four-in-hand, for the coachman knows that if he can get the splinter bars of his leaders through without touching his coach will follow all right. But the science of driving a gun, with three pairs of hands at work, is of a different character altogether. Much is due to number one of the team who rides in advance as pilot, and the horses must receive their share of credit for what is really a marvellous performance, for the team winds in and out,

and round about, and dashes back the way it came amid thunders of applause, without having touched a post or moved a peg.

Still more exciting is the galloping performance. The trumpet sounds, and the troop whirl forward like a hurricane. Here is something that realises for us all we have read of the wild stress of battle. It is a bit of martial ode, or of a war-song of heroes, such as sends the blood surging through the veins, to hear the thunder of the hoofs, the clank and rattle of the accoutrements, the onset of that living thunderbolt of blood and iron as it whirls madly by—and again, well done R.H.A.!

This last display has almost silenced Bois Gilbert—nothing that the ancient tourney had to show could in anyway come near this mad charge of men and metal. But the Templar Knight remarks by way of digression that in the Tournaments of his early days, it was customary to proclaim them in foreign countries, and to invite stranger Knights to come and exhibit their prowess, so opportunely enough comes the turn of the Australian team, who have journeyed from the other side of the globe, from regions of which the Templar never so much as dreamt, over sea and land, to run a tilt at this same Tournament.

Fine fellows are these Victorian Rangers, in their brownish, Khaki-coloured uniforms, neat and workmanlike; swarthy with the touch of the Southern sun. They are a reconnoitring party, and send out vedettes while the rest dismount, light a fire, cook their "tuck," and smoke their pipes with great content. Then crack goes a rifle in front, and all are on the alert; away go mess-tins and pouches into their proper receptacles, while there is mounting in hot haste, and scouts dash forth clearing hedges and ditches. And now having discovered the enemy, and made their observations, the whole party retires to slow music, and disappears.

Hardly are the Australians out of sight than a band of gymnasts make their appearance, with their great vaulting-horse, which the Templar recognises at once as one of the appliances of knightly exercises in his young days. These men who play "fly the garter" over man and horse, and set each other flying leaps and somersaults, are of the Army Gymnastic Staff, and are trained as instructors of the rank and file in the various regiments. And after this good round of jumping, in comes a forty-

pounder Armstrong gun, with a detachment of artillery from Shoeburyness, and they show how this grim-looking piece is unlimbered, fired, rattled off its carriage on to the ground, and rattled back again, limbered up and away, with no more trouble about it than if it had been a wooden pop-gun.

Then follows something like a steeple-chase over hurdles and fences, the Australians well to the front, and showing good cross-country talent. Over timber, in and out of a double fence, a "real" water jump, and then to top a wall, not the Pyramus and Thisbe kind of wall, but a stout brick wall of wooden bricks, four feet one inch high, with a row of loose ones at the top, which the horses like to scatter about a bit.

But for a bit of real beautiful pageantry commend us to the Royal Horse Guards, and their famous musical ride. Martial pomp and display can hardly farther go than with these splendid horsemen—splendid in silver helm, in glittering cuirass, in all the gold and glitter of faultless equipment. Perfect is the warrior from the well-polished boot to the crest of the shining helm; perfect in behaviour and condition is the coal-black charger, with the silken coat. And all this strength and power of horse and man is so guided by a silver thread of music, as it were, as to flow in gliding harmony of colour and form, like some gorgeous ribbon in silver and gold, and shot with curious dyes. Here is the glow and brightness of the old régime, of the old order of things, of which these splendid martial figures are perhaps the last representatives. As they ride away in stately formation, to the dying strains of the band, and as the last glittering cuirass is swallowed up in the outer darkness, we seem to bid adieu to the old pomp and circumstance of glorious war, with all the memories of the grand old fighting days, ere yet were machine-guns, and repeating-rifles, and the deadly inventions of modern science. The Templar Knight feels this anyhow; he will not wait for the general engagement; he has a headache; and has a long way to go . . .

The last scene of all shows the development of modern warfare, where everything goes with a rush, and battles are lost and won in five minutes by the clock. Some magic has brought a river across the arena. The mass of water flowing in has given a delicious whiff of freshness and cool-

ness to the air. But the coolness and quietude are soon over. Here come the engineers, with their pontoons. Yonder they make gabions, and raise extempore batteries. All are as busy as bees, and working as if every moment were their last—as would be likely enough in actual warfare. But, work as they may, the enemy appear in force; firing rolls all along the line, and cracks and splutters from every point of vantage. But the bridge is finished, and over they go in a series of rushes, the machine-guns greeting each attempt with their horrid crackle. Quick-firing guns and infant cannon join in the general hurly-burly. There would be horrid slaughter going on were this real fighting. As it is, the position is carried by dint of blowing up things right and left; the British flag waves triumphant; and—God Save the Queen!

But the Military Tournament has something about it that passeth show. It is not a mere isolated annual display, for it represents one of the chief influences in developing the physique of the youth of the country, whether serving in the regulars, or taking their military training with the Volunteers. The grand Tournament is the crowning act of so many distinct and regimental contests. In all these the Tournament Committee, with the Queen at the head as patron, and composed of the chief military authorities, takes a paternal interest, finding the money for prizes and expenses, awarding the medals, and offering its own prizes and its own distinctions, to be competed for by the winners in the local Tournaments. For the Auxillary Forces the same principle is observed, the preliminary contests, as far as the metropolis is concerned, being arranged by the Associated Schools of Arms, a body which has done much to forward the general physical well-being of our London Volunteers.

Great has been the influence of the Military Tournament upon the spirit and physique of all ranks in the army. Few things have done more to lighten the tedium of barracks and country quarters, and to keep men away from the temptations to drink and debauchery, which come of an aimless, profitless leisure, for success in the arena demands at least temperance and some amount of self-denial and control. And regimental competitions of all kinds, cricket matches in summer, foot races and football matches, with athletic sports in general, give life to the

monotonous round of drill and parades, and increase the individual value of the soldier in the camp, on the march, in bivouac, or in battle.

ON THE NORFOLK COAST.

NORFOLK, since its invasion by railways, has been opened to the world at large, and, as novel ground for excursionists, has consequently grown into fashion. The more's the pity for those who knew and enjoyed it in the first half of the present century.

Geologists have told us that Norfolk is only a heap of rubbish. This is true, and offers great advantages. A light, gravelly, and porous soil, means a pure, dry atmosphere, and a healthy dwelling-place. Depressions in the rubbish heaps become the sites of numerous small lakes, called "Broads." The undulating surface of this mass of detritus produces pretty landscapes, mostly looking to the north; but the "splendid inland scenery," now advertised as an inducement to take an express train, with through carriages, starting from King's Cross, may be taken as a flattering, nay, overdrawn description.

Time was, when tired of the routine of business, or the restraints of a pretentious neighbourhood, or simply in the want of change and rest, you could retire to some out-of-the-way nook near the Broads, or could discover some unfrequented village on the coast, where you might occupy a clean lodging, with plain and wholesome fare of fish, wild fowl, or whatever came to hand, living at your ease, with no need of evening dress, amusing yourself thoroughly with the birds, beasts, fishes, speech, and habits of the locality, and gaining renewed strength by your contact with Nature.

When the hour came to return to the world, and resume your old, every-day occupations, you made the start with a wrench and a resolution like those which help you to take your seat in a dentist's chair, or rather—as that sitting soon comes to an end—you understand the feelings of the prisoner who is stepping back to his place on the treadmill. You form a resolution to be once more free at the very earliest opportunity.

At present, you are never sure that you will not stumble on some first-class friend and his lady, who have penetrated into wilds before unknown. At Sherringham

there has arisen a "Grand Hotel," the installation of which must have been beheld by the natives as if Aladdin's palace had dropped in their midst.

Cromer was a quiet, homely health resort, believed in for invalids requiring bracing air, by the few who knew it. But it was little known outside the county, unless for the excellence of its crustaceans. You drove there leisurely in your gig, or, if newly married, in a post-chaise, sure to find, at old Tucker's, I think, a lobster, a chicken, and a good glass of wine.

The peculiarities of Norfolk speech were many, sometimes not a little puzzling, and maybe so still. Two negatives do not make an affirmative: "I haven't no objections, ma'am, to what you say." Here is another fragment of dialogue:

"How do you do"—pronounced "dew"
—"John, bor!"

"Very well, I thank ye, Mary, mor."

What is "bor," and what is "mor"? we ask of etymologists and lexicographers.

"Bor" is the vocative case singular of a defective noun, of which no other case, I believe, exists. We might call it an expletive, a redundancy, not knowing what other function to assign to it. "Mor" is also the vocative singular of the nominative "mawther," a great girl, a young woman, a female hobby-de-hoy. The mother of a sickly and fanciful daughter has been heard to say, "My mawther, she do nothin' but eat thapes and dodmans." Thapes are green gooseberries; dodmans, snails.

Note the "do" in the previous example. The grammar of the Norfolk peasantry confounds the first person singular, present tense, indicative mood, with the third person plural of the same. Thus, they say, "My lord have ivver so much money, so he keep ivver so many sarvants and hosses, and drive about in a coach and four. My lady smile ivvery time she speak to me. Tom Noddy, the coachman, live in one of them there housen."

The names of several well-known fishes are commonly used in a plural sense, as pike, perch, roach, dace, bream. This, however, is good English. Eels are an exception. But no one would say "a couple of pikes," unless he meant a couple of lances. Witness the elegant couplet:

Horsey pike,
None like.

Certainly, the likes of them are not frequently met with. Mr. F. Danby

Palmer, in his interesting sequel to "Yarmouth Notes," records that in the beginning of April, 1845, R. Rising, Esq., had taken, at Horsey, a pike measuring three and a half feet in length, two feet in circumference, and weighing twenty-eight pounds. It was supposed to be from eight to ten years old, but was probably a great deal older. Its superior, however, had already been found in a Norfolk Broad. Many years previously—I cannot give the date—Mr. John Kerrison, then of Woodbastwick, caught a pike weighing forty pounds, which he kept alive in a fish-pond, supplying it with all the roach and dace it could eat, and weighing it from time to time. But he could never get it to exceed its original forty pounds. Perhaps it fretted and pined at the loss of liberty, and the prohibition to catch and devour its own grandchildren.

Mundesley is a pleasant seaside retreat, at sufficient distance from a railway station to save it from being over-run by pleasure-trainers. One of these days, it will disappear, through the sea's continual gnawing at the base of the cliff on which it stands. But the comfortable old inn there—if yet existing—had taken up so prudent a position inland, that it will still hold its own customers for some years to come, unless an extra-phenomenal tide should bring an earlier catastrophe.

From Mundesley, north-westwards to Trimingham, along the beach, at low water, is a remarkable walk, almost unique.

Rocky cliffs are of varying picturesqueness, according to their material, shape, and colouring. A chalk cliff, seen near in sunshine, with its bare-faced and blinding whiteness, is ugly, even when spotted here and there with a few dark-green wild cabbages. At Trimingham, the cliff is earthy, you may call it a section of a turnip field, if you like; but it is tinted with the richest hues of brown and amber, mostly of a sombre shade, clouded with yellow clays and ochres, and relieved by bright patches of flowering plants which have been caught on ledges in their fall from the brink and brow of the cliff.

It is well-known that peculiar districts are accompanied by a peculiar fauna. Here, the line of cliffs on the shore is parallel to the line of lobsters and crabs out at sea. Sir Charles Lyell includes them in a series called the Boulder formation; and it is among the washed-out boulders at the bottom of the sea, that the lobsters and

crabs lodge and play at hide-and-seek. The nature of this rugged submarine pavement is visible to any one whose corns permit him to walk along the Sherringham beach after high water. That tract is so stony, that no shrimping can be done there.

The fishing for the larger crustaceans is found to be a profitable employment from Mundealey to Sherringham; their actual range extends somewhat farther each way. Where bait, as at the former place, is not readily procurable, lobster-fishing is a tedious process for the poor fellows who undertake it as a means of livelihood.

First, they have to dig for those large sea-worms that are found in the banks of sand, called "The Lows," in front of the beach, at low water. With these, a series of hooks, placed at regular intervals along the same line, are baited, to catch plaice, flounders, soles, and, as a rare prize, a brill or a turbot; all which are therefore technically called "line-fish." Sometimes, however, every hook is persistently taken by dog-fish, the smaller of which are useless except for manure, and the larger only employed as bait in case of necessity. Frenchmen eat dog-fish—Englishmen never.

The line-fish are then cut up as bait for lobsters and crabs, and it is only then that the actual fishing can commence; and that is often obliged to be deferred by unfavourable weather. The bait becomes stale, and the task has to recommence from the beginning. It is generally supposed that crabs are among the scavengers of the sea; but they are found to be nice respecting the freshness of their bait, lobsters proving less fastidious.

The lobster net or trap, employed on this line of coast, consists of a circular iron-hoop loaded with lead, about sixteen inches in diameter, which diameter is crossed by a couple of small ropes placed side by side, on which pass two or three leather slips for the purpose of fastening the bait. The bait, consisting of chopped "line-fish," is placed in a small purse-like net; a handful of the dried roots of "quick" or couch-grass, called the "stuffing," is placed upon it, to swell the purse; the strings are drawn tight to secure the contents, and the whole is suspended in the centre of the hoop by means of the diametral ropes and the leather slips.

The hoop itself carries a deep loose net, into which the crabs and lobsters are to fall. The trap, so prepared, is let down

into the sea, by a rope about twenty fathoms long, on the whole length of which cork floats are intertwined. The rope terminates at the top in a log of wood painted red to serve as a buoy.

The apparatus takes its chance in the sea, till its owners think fit to draw it into their boat by a hooked stick, styled "a bandy." Each crab-boat carries two men, with twenty, thirty, or more nets, according as the season is advanced. The day's catch is often sold to travelling dealers, who have their regular rounds.

In some places, the lobsters and crabs caught are deposited till the end of the week in perforated wooden boxes, called "cobes," and anchored in the sea. But in rough weather they thus become inaccessible to their owners, and are sometimes sent adrift by violent storms, and so altogether lost. To obviate this mishap, the cobes are placed within staked enclosures, called "coys," from a Dutch word signifying a cage. The coys have unexpectedly proved to act as breakwaters, and to add to the security of the coast by protecting the cliff from the encroachments of the sea. In those parts where marine worms are not obtainable as first bait, mackerel or other fish are obliged to be purchased.

The Norfolk lobsters and crabs are not large, but exceedingly sweet and good. With crabs, the feminine gender is the more worthy; for she-crabs sell for more than he-crabs. At Cromer, the former are termed "broadsters," from the breadth of their apron; the latter, "pinsters." These terms are technically employed by the fishermen almost to the exclusion of the word "crab." The price of lobsters in East Anglia used to be somewhat higher than in London; but the railroad levels prices, as it has levelled many other things. There are times of the year—a close season, for the greater part of July, while the lobsters are changing their shells—when there is no home supply; and as soon as the herring make their appearance off Yorkshire, the fishermen betake themselves to that more remunerative harvest.

If you make friends with crab-catchers, and your stomach can stand the convulsive movements of what they call their "bibbety-bobbety" little boats, you may enjoy a day's novel style of sport, and carry away with you a share of the take, honestly obtained, in this case.

I say "honestly," because a story was told me of a man, in "respectable" cir-

cumstances, who asked permission to accompany the fishermen. Now this respectable person was a confirmed kleptomaniac. He could go nowhere without laying hands on something, no matter what.

On some coasts, when a lobster is caught, it is disabled for mischief by thrusting a wooden peg between its pincers. This is needlessly cruel, and, besides, is apt to spoil the flesh of the claw. Here, they close the pincers by tying them together with string. This takes more time, and requires two persons to manacle the creature properly.

While his companions were thus employed, our individual, the slave of his instincts, slipped an untied lobster into his trousers' pocket. The lobster, of course, pinched him sharply in self-defence. For a while he bore the pain with Spartan fortitude; but soon, he was obliged to complain that a lobster had bitten him, and would not leave hold.

"Where is it biting you? I don't see no lobster," said fisherman number one.

"Here, on my right leg. It crept into my pocket."

"Oh! In your pocket?" said fisherman number two, who had heard of his visitor's moral weakness. "The only way to get rid of it before another lobster has crept into your other pocket, is to land, and to set you before a blazing fire, until it drops."

Accordingly, they placed him in front of the kitchen grate of the first public-house they met with. The lobster was half roasted, and its captor, too.

Both the men themselves, as well as their wives and children, occasionally eke out their subsistence by shrimping.

Many curious objects of natural history are to be obtained by searching the refuse of the shrimper's net. The shrimps are of the brown kind—when cooked—commonly called "flat-noses," and are retailed on the spot alive. This species of shrimp also frequents the brackish water at the mouth of rivers. It is known, too, as the Lynn shrimp, being found in abundance in The Wash. The pink shrimp—when cooked—a distinct species, is caught only in deeper waters, and is dredged for by a superior class of fishermen. It is beyond the reach of the humble shrimpers of the cliff line, whose shrimping grounds lie along an extent of sandy banks, which are covered at high water, and exposed at low. With certain winds they are most dangerous to shipping. Many and many are the vessels whose crews have been heard on dark

nights shouting their despair, till they suddenly ceased, and human voice was no longer to be heard across the raging surf.

Further westwards, you come to Stiffkey, pronounced Stukey, best known to the world—if known at all—for its excellent sluice mussels, brought into vogue by the late Duke of Sussex, just as George the Fourth, on his return from Scotland, made the fortune of the Finnan smoked haddocks.

Mussels, before being eaten, prefer to repose, a year or two at shortest, in pits or parks, fed by sluices, the salt-water of which contains an admixture of fresh. So treated, they become finer, plumper, and reputedly more certain to agree with the person who eats them. But the causes and conditions of the latter point still remain a mystery.

One savant believes that he has identified the microbe of the unwholesome mussel. I fancy that the aforesaid microbe is only a maggot hatched in that doctor's brain. The real truth is, that the seat of the mischief exists in the individual eater, and not in the mussel eaten—of course, if fresh; because all edible molluscs, kept too long, are indigestible, or worse. Few persons, like King George the First, prefer their oysters "high," because he was accustomed to enjoy them in that state at Hanover, when railways were not. In the same family, all the members, except one, will be able to eat fresh mussels with impunity. That one member, owing to some innate peculiarity of constitution, cannot swallow a single mussel without feeling the ill-effects of the imprudence.

Here is an authentic case, which ought to satisfy medical commentators:

Some children, with a small allowance of weekly pence, had also a stingy father-in-law. Those children happened to be fond of mussels; and on Saturdays, when the carrier with his cart from the coast went round the town crying "Cockles alive!" and "Fine Stukey mussels!" they would put their pence together, in order to enjoy a shell-fish treat.

The father-in-law had often observed with what glee they ate their Saturday's supper off mussels, unhurt by indigestion or other ailment; so one evening, resolved to taste them, too, he took the tempting dish and devoured them all.

The children ate their bread and butter meal, shorn of its savoury shell-fish, in silence, not daring to complain in words, however sorrowful they might look. But soon their grief was turned to wonder.

The father-in-law first became uneasy, then his face turned red and swollen, he rubbed himself to assuage intolerable itching, and finally retired to his private apartments.

When those children went to bed, didn't they giggle all the way upstairs?

Moral—in Hibernian style: Never eat mussels, until you know by experience that they won't disagree with you—exactly as you should never bathe, until you first have learnt to swim.

When, tired of seaside village life, you long for the livelier existence of town, pleasant Yarmouth is within easy reach by rail, where you may enjoy both maritime and urban delights. On few coasts will you behold such crowds of shipping as are often to be seen in Yarmouth Roads. Mr. F. Danby Palmer's "Notes" relate that already, in July, 1836, "Yarmouth is very full of strangers, who flock from all parts of the country to enjoy the cool sea breezes. We believe there is not any other place that affords so excellent a view of shipping in motion as Yarmouth Roads, it being the great thoroughfare for all vessels trading to the North. The Bath-room is one of the principal attractions to visitors, as it is a most agreeable lounge during the heat of the day, and frequent undress balls enliven the youthful part of the company."

In 1837, November the first, there had been from fifteen hundred to two thousand vessels windbound and at anchor in the Roads. These had got under sail on Sunday, and were immediately followed by about one thousand vessels from beyond Lowestoft; and it was calculated that more than three thousand vessels passed through the Roads in five hours, in such close procession, that the sea could not be discerned beyond them.

This makes an enormous fleet; but among the many famous personages who have passed through Yarmouth Roads in search of adventure, few have been more illustrious, or illustrated, than the friend of our boyhood, Robinson Crusoe.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "*Louis Draycott*," "*Geoffrey Stirling*," "*Aunt Hepsey's Foundling*," etc.

CHAPTER X. JIM AND ALGIE GO A VISITING.

"YOU must keep one of your gloves on, and hold the other in your hand. You must dangle it—so. That's the way the

Honourable Bob does when he's in muff, and goes to pay visita."

Thus Jim to Algie, as the two floated, all in an open boat, Valetta-wards. They had no business to be in the said boat at all; on which subject every now and then grave doubts crossed the shallow minds of the boatmen they had engaged to ferry them across. But the "plenty small signors Inglese" have paid them beforehand, and paid them well. Perhaps the "bambinos" will be lost, and a reward offered; who could say?

Meanwhile the boat glided on over the silver sea, and Jim was in great spirits. He was also dressed in his best. Algie, attired to match, was happy too, but a certain fear was beneath his joy.

The question of the gloves was a puzzler. Gloves were always a thorn in the flesh to Algie. Difficult to get on; hard to get off—unless peeled off as you would skin a rabbit, and that made Joseppina cross. He looked at Jim's dégage and easy air with envy and admiration; tried to shove a little fat hand into one limp glove; failed miserably, and compromised matters by rolling the pair into a ball and stuffing them into his pocket. In spite of the glory of his best suit, Algie had apparently forgotten the ceremony of washing his hands—so had Jim.

"If you see any one looking out from the balcony, lie down under the awning," said Jim, training his brother in the subtleties of life's crooked ways. "They won't see us if we lie close. They'll think it's an empty dyso."

"Sha'n't," said Algie; "don't want to spoil mine coat—mine noo coat, 'oo knows."

But Jim's thoughts had drifted.

"I hope we're not doing a caddish thing," he said, looking as solemn as a young owl. "You know Mr. Ginger says it doesn't matter what a man does, so as he doesn't do a caddish thing. If he does a caddish thing, there is nothing for it but for him to 'go down.' I wonder what that means! Of course, we couldn't have got away like this if Mabel hadn't been ill. I heard Pap tell Mr. Jones last night that she was quite upset, and must be kept quiet. Mr. Jones looked awfully sad. I think he wanted to see her very much. Everybody wants to see Mabel."

"Wantah to see Mabel mine own self," said Algie, at this juncture, puckering up his face as if for a cry; "wantah if she were better? wantah to go home now direckly minute."

Here was a pretty state of things !

"Algie," said Jim, waving his disengaged glove in a lordly manner, "don't be a goosey-gander, or I'll never bring you out with me again. These men will think you're nothing but a baby."

At this Algie choked a little, but gathered himself together and put a brave face on matters.

They had reached the harbour steps, and soon, hand in hand, were climbing that steep stone ladder, Algie casting fearsome glances at the unsavoury beggars who lurked here and there in the shadowy corners.

Right away to the main guard, with its great guard-house, went these two young adventurers.

"We're not on guard duty, to-day," said Jim, with an air, and a patronising glance at the "Queen's" men, who were hanging about the place.

Algie held tight on to his brother's hand. He thought that things were beginning to look rather serious, and home seemed very, very far away. He hated going out walks with Joseppina; but he would have been glad, oh, so glad, to have her by him now. The streets were full of people; carriages drove hither and thither; how small, how very small he felt!

Not so Jim. Jim went on straight ahead, making for the Palace.

"Where do we be going now?" said Algie, tremulously.

"We're going to see old Bogles," said Jim, as bold as a buccanear.

Past the sentry and up the marble stairs went the two lads, the leading spirit undismayed by the wondering glances of one or two people who were coming down.

Arrived at the grand entrance, Jim took serious stock of the situation. There was the usher, a gentlemanly-looking individual of inscrutable countenance, who might have sat for the portrait of, say, some great diplomatist, or the superintendent of Scotland Yard, and, as it were, lying in state, on a table, long and narrow, like a bier, the Governor's visitors' book, with Mrs. Governor's visitors' book beside it.

Other high functionaries were scattered about, and there was an air of subdued bustle and preparation, as though the arrival of some personage was expected.

"And who may you be, my little man?" said the usher, bending down politely to bring himself to Jim's level.

"I'm not your little man; and I want

to see old—I want to see the Governor," said Jim; and then it seemed to him that the usher suddenly disappeared, and in his place stood His Excellency, fully accoutred in what the Honourable Bob would have called his "war paint," and attended by a little group of officers, also in their best attire.

"Ha—hum!" said the portly Governor, staring through his eye-glasses. "What's this? What's this? Who have we here?"

"If you please, your Excellency," said the urbane usher, with a truly marvellous bow, "I do not know. I was just about to enquire."

"We are Major Clutterbuck's sons," said Jim's piping voice. "We belong to the 193rd. Some people—but they are not nice people—call us the Major's 'scramble.' We have come"—here Jim faltered just ever so little—"we have come to see you."

"Tum to see 'oo," said Algie.

The military secretary stared like a basilisk; the A.D.C. blew his nose violently, though it was quite impossible that any one could have a cold in the head in such weather; and the Governor put a question which no one could have anticipated:

"Are you the young gentleman who walked on the roof?" he said, rather sharply, to Algie.

"Oh no," said Jim, once more at ease; "that was Phil—King Baby, you know. Mr. Jones got him down." Then he added, with a bird-like look at his interlocutor: "I hope you don't mind there being another King in Malta beside your own self? You know, he really is so very small, I don't think you need mind."

"I rather like it," said General Oglevie, grimly; at which the A.D.C. was able to have his laugh out; and even the military secretary smiled.

"We have a few moments to spare, I think, gentlemen," said the Governor, after that. "I will see these—unexpected visitors in the office."

So Jim and Algie were duly escorted into a small, snug room on the right hand of the entrance, and His Excellency having taken a seat on a couch near the door, the staff followed, with much rattling of chains and clattering of swords. It was quite like an audience given to two young foreign princes.

"And, pray, who told you to come and see me?" said the Governor.

"Oh, no one," replied Jim, who had drawn Algie across the room, till the two stood close by their angust host's knee—"no one at all; we came of our own selves. We are out making 'a round of calls.' That's what Mrs. Musters says—'a round of calls.' Do you know Mrs. Musters? She is not very nice; but she belongs to our regiment, so we must make the best of her. That's what Pap says."

"Your father is very wise. In a regiment everything should be made the best of," said the Governor, gravely.

"On-y swore qui mal-y-pense, as the Honourable Bob says, don't you know," said Jim, with a slight but inimitable gesture denoting the screwing of a glass into an eye-socket.

The A.D.C. disappeared as promptly as if he had been pulled out of the room from behind. The military secretary passed his hand over his moustache. His Excellency alone was grave.

"Quite so," he said. "Mr. Dacre is a young man of wide experience."

Jim blushed; he recognised the fact that he had been "cheeky," or, at all events, appeared so. The wisdom of changing the subject of conversation, or "turning on another tapper"—as he expressed it in his own mind—suggested itself at once.

"I suppose you know that one of our soldiers is drowned—one of our very best soldiers! It made sister Mabel quite upsetted; she couldn't see Mr. Jones when he came yesterday. And that made him very, very sorry."

Oh, Jim, Jim—if you had only seen the significant looks passing from one to the other above your guileless head, you would have bridled that unruly member of yours a little better; you would, indeed!

At this stage of the proceedings, Algie thought he had better put his little oar in:

"Mister Jones be's a welly kind man. He gave Phil a yellow boy."

"He means an English sovereign by that," said Jim, in condescending explanation. "Phil lended it to us, and we got it changed, and paid the boatmen out of it to bring us here. I hope we haven't done a caddish thing to take the yellow boy! Mr. Dacre says if you do a caddish thing, there is nothing for you but to 'go down.' Do you know what that means?"

"Yes," said His Excellency, gravely. "I have seen many men 'go down.' It would be a very caddish thing, you know, if you didn't give your little brother the—the yellow boy back again."

"Oh, but we shall," said Jim, stoutly. "I can get as many as I like now, because Pap says his ship's come in. It has been a long, long time coming," added this miserable Jim, with a deep sigh. "Bertie and I have watched for it many and many a time."

"Ahem!" said the Governor, and a general air of discomfort set in.

"We shall be going to school in England soon," said Jim again. "Pap didn't like us to go, you know, because he said he wanted us to have plenty of 'scopes.'"

"I am sure your father has had his wishes thoroughly fulfilled in that respect," said His Excellency, drily; then he shook hands with them both, thanked them for coming, and bade them good-bye, a hint which Jim fully understood. What that young person would have said if he had known that by the Governor's express desire an attendant from the Palace followed them at a discreet distance to see that they came to no harm, must be left to the imagination.

On, down the Strada Reale, keeping carefully to the right-hand side, went our pair. Suddenly Jim caught sight of Captain Rowan and Vernon Halkett on the other side of the street. In a moment the two boys were on the curbstone making frantic signals to their friends. The men crossed quickly, and expressed surprise at the encounter.

"I thought you'd be exprised," said Jim.

"Fought you'd be 'prised," echoed Algie, with a delighted and expansive smile.

"My dear boys—what are you about?" said Captain Rowan. He looked pale and haggard, as though sleepless nights and anxious days had sapped the brightness and buoyancy of his youth. He could not rise to the droll side of the situation; but Algie was comforted by a twinkle in Dr. Halkett's dark eyes.

"What are we doing?" cried Jim, exultant, "why, we're paying visits—we've been to see old Bogles—"

"See ole Bogles—" echoed Algie.

"You've been to the Palace?" This in high crescendo from the two men.

"Yes; and the old chap made himself very pleasant."

"Jim," said Captain Rowan, "you are immense; you really are. . . ."

"He didn't mind a bit—give you my word," said the youngster.

"Does your—do your people at home know you are wandering about in this free-and-easy manner?"

"Oh, dear, no;" said Jim. "Mabel's ill, you know—"

"Ill?"—in a dismayed voice.

"Yes; ever so bad. She couldn't see Mr. Jones when he came yesterday. He didn't like it, I can tell you. Mother and Joseppina were with Mabel, and Bertie had gone out with a message—so we—we—set off, don't you know—"

"It was rather mean, Jim."

"I told Algie I was afraid it was a caddish thing to do—I mean starting on the sly—"

This part of the conversation was carried on with Dr. Halkett. Captain Rowan seemed to be held silent by some strong, but suppressed agitation.

"The best thing you can do is to go back again," said Dr. Halkett, with decision.

"We're just going to see Mr. Jones, at the hotel, you know," said Jim; "and please don't come with us. It won't be the same compliment, you know, if a grown-up person goes with us."

It was impossible not to take Jim seriously, because he looked so serious over the whole business.

"Well, we will wait for you at the steps—you know the way there, eh, Jim?"

"Do I know my way about, or don't I?" said Jim, in his most crushing manner. Then he put on his wheedlingest face, and addressed Captain Rowan in a pointed manner.

"You won't tell of us, will you, Captain Rowan? I didn't tell of you. I've kep' that 'safe secret' all the time—and I'm not going to tell it now—give you my word."

But Jim felt as one who holds a frog in his hand, and fears it may slip out at any moment. A secret is a slippery thing to keep tight hold of, sometimes! Dr. Halkett tried hard to look as if he were deaf, and perhaps neither of the men was sorry when the boys set off towards the hotel at a smart trot. The attendant from the Palace, who had been deeply interested in a shop window, strolled casually in their wake—a sort of guardian-angel in disguise—and Michael pounced upon them, like a spider upon two small

flies, as they turned into the arched doorway of the hotel.

"You want Sare Jones? It is well. He is to be seen. . . . I go before."

The boys were more impressed by Michael than they had been by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the island. Michael had more "side" about him than that potentate.

"Two signors Inglesses, plenty small, wish to see Sare Jones."

It sounded a most imposing announcement; and the door, flung widely open, admitted two rather crestfallen little bipeds, it must be confessed.

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. Jones, springing up from his chair by the window. "There is nothing wrong, is there? Your sister—she is not worse?"

Michael had heard enough. To the astute observer a very tiny link is enough to connect one fact with another, and make a decipherable whole. He cracked each separate joint of each hand when he found himself alone on the landing.

"It is the sistare—the sistare of the plenty small signors Inglesses. He is up to the head and the ears—he is in lof. That's why he sigh—so, and turn up the eye—so. Ahimé! I am glad. When the lof is in the heart, the hand it is open. Go 'long!"

This last was a flower of speech, supposed to be peculiarly and idiomatically English. It was reserved for those moments in which Michael surprised even himself by his proficiency in that tongue.

"One Milor Ingless he say to Michael: 'Tell me not you are of Malta; you are very much born in England place.' Go 'long! You are what we call making an apricot of yourself to me. I bettare know of things."

It may be presumed that, if any such conversation ever took place, the Milor was Irish, and had kissed the blarney stone not once, but many times. Still, we all have our little weaknesses, and one of Michael's ambitions was to be taken for an Englishman; another, to know everything about everybody else's business; hence his delight at the discovery, or the supposed discovery, of the secret of the strange and varying moods of "Sare Jones."

It would perhaps be hard to say, with entire conviction, that Jim's mind was absolutely free from all thoughts of possible yellow boys, as he sat dangling his somewhat spindly legs in the best private sitting-room of the leading Malta hotel.

He felt that Mr. Jones must feel the highly complimentary character of the visit now being paid to him; but whether that visit would ultimately take the form of unlimited ices of rare and curious kinds, or of some more substantial guerdon, he could not foretell.

"So you came off without any one knowing," said Mr. Jones, looking more than doubtfully at his visitors, indeed, with an expression of countenance that seemed to relegate yellow boys and ices into a dim and misty futurity. "You came off without any one knowing. Will not your mother and—and Miss Mabel be seriously alarmed? I fear you have been very inconsiderate—very inconsiderate indeed."

"It's having so much 'scope' that does it," said Jim, looking rather rueful it must be confessed; "you see Pap doesn't like us to be checked. But it wasn't us made May ill—it was Corporal Jack going and getting drowned."

"Corporal Jack?" said Mr. Jones, puzzled. "Yes; I heard there was a man of the 193rd drowned. Did your sister—did Miss Mabel take an interest in this young man?"

"Why, he's Polly's husband, don't you know?" said Jim, amazed at the crass ignorance of some people. "And there's the baby—a quite new baby."

"Fite an ikkle, ikkle baby," put in Algie, "ikkler than Phil."

"Oh, yes," said Jim, with a surpassing contempt for the very young of the human species. "I really don't know if its eyes are open yet; do you know, sir, if they take as long as puppies?"—this with the utmost politeness.

"Bless my soul!" cried Mr. Jones, with some heat. "I know nothing about babies; now you mention it I don't think I ever saw a real baby. I think your little brother is the smallest child I ever had anything to do with; but, you know, I am very sorry to hear about this poor girl—Polly—and about the. . ."

"Our soldiers call it a 'kid,' don't you know?" said Jim.

"And a very good name, too—well—this 'kid'—"

"Mabel was very sorry too. She cried dreadful; she was sad as sad, and she cuddled us all up and cried and cried—"

"Her was c'ying and c'ying," said Algie, in his earnestness almost overturning himself off his chair—Algie was always precarious as to stability when seated on a

proper drawing-room chair—"and we squeeged Phil, and he c'ied, too. Then we went away—"

"Polly was our nurse once," said Jim, flattering himself that Mr. Jones took the keenest interest in all family details—as indeed he did—"and I runned away back to her—after Corporal Jack took her, you know—took her same as Captain. . . . Dear, dear—the frog was very nearly slipping out of Jim's hand; but happily he remembered himself, and took a firm grip. "I runned away to the huts, don't yer know, and Joseppina brought me back, and slapped me—yes, she did; but I didn't tell mother, because the Honourable Bob says it's a caddish thing to tell of a woman."

"Certainly—certainly," said Mr. Jones, hastily; "so now this poor woman—Polly, eh?—is left a widow with quite a new baby!"

Oh, Jim—Jim—that mischievous tongue of yours has done a good deal of mischief in its day; but to-day, though you know it not, you have done well for the cause of the widow and the fatherless!

"Do you know what Mabel told us?" said Jim, encouraged by the kindly, attentive face of his host, "she told us that Polly kept saying over and over again: 'There's the childer to think of.' She told us that just before she kissed us such a lot, and cried so bad."

Mr. Jones was very still; he showed like a silhouette against the shaded window.

"I think May will be better soon," continued Jim. "And the men won't be rude to her, and make her head ache so. I have to put my hand on it to keep it cool, you know, sometimes."

"The men be rude to her?" said Mr. Jones, in such a strange kind of a voice that Algie began to think he should like to go home. "What men?"

"Oh, the men with bills; she always sees them, you know. Pap says she has such a way with her; she can smooth them over. But she cries a good lot now and again—"

Then, with a long sigh of relief—for Jim idolised his sister May with every fibre of his little being—the boy added: "I think she won't be sad and sorry any more now, though, because Pap's ship has come in, you see."

Mr. Jones rose quickly, flung back the jealousies, and stood facing the balcony, as if he wanted air. Jim slipped off his chair, came up to his side, and looked up into his face.

"It is, indeed," he said, earnestly. "And do you know Bertie and I shall go to a school—a big school in England, you know, where they play cricket every day, and knock one another about like ninepins. That's what Mr. Ginger says, and he was at a monstrous great school called Eton; so he ought to know."

At another time Mr. Jones might have smiled at Jim's ideas of the salient points of life in our public schools; but there was no smile in him just now.

"Why do you blow your nose such a lot?" said Jim the candid, after a long, upward, searching glance. "Have you got the hay-fever, like Mrs. Musters? She doesn't look at all nice when she has the hay-fever. And Lily was a naughty girl, and drew a picture of her, with a nose like so"—here Jim drew an outrageous outline in the air. "Mabel was angry; but I liked it, and so did Algie."

"Whants to ahee it agen," said Algie, roused into longing by the remembrance of past delights.

But at this stage of affairs, Mrs. Musters, her nose, and the too delightful picture of the same, designed and executed by Miss Lilian Clutterbuck, were all forgotten, as the sound of a familiar—too familiar—voice smote upon the ears of the two young adventurers.

"It's Pap!" said Jim, suddenly, looking as though his clothes were a full size too big for him.

Algie, after one look into Mr. Jones's face, prudently what he called "hidid" himself behind that portly gentleman, and peeped warily at the advancing enemy from the shelter of his coat-skirts.

"The Major is now to arrive," said Michael, in his shrillest voice, and best English, and with his best bow! "I tell him the two plenty small signors are with Sare Jones in the moment that now is."

Mr. Jones was, what the Honourable Bob would have called, "on the spot" in an instant.

"Permit me, my dear Major Clutterbuck, to plead for these culprits," he said, going forward to meet the irate parent, and tucking Algie's little hot hand safely into his own; "they have been having a little spree—a little innocent spree."

The Major flung himself into a chair, opened the front of his dust-coloured coat, and flung it wide.

"Innocent?" he said, "innocent? Why they have been to the Palace, they have

waylaid the Governor, one of his men is downstairs now. It is monstrous—it will be the talk of the whole garrison."

"The Governor was very pleased to see us—he made himself very pleasant," said Jim, fast recovering his native impudence. "I told him your. . . ."

"Michael—Michael," cried Mr. Jones, "some iced soda-water and cognac; hurry up—the Major is exhausted."

"I fly, Sare Jones," said Michael, "I make no stay."

And for that time at least Master Jim was silenced.

The Major partook of refreshment, obsequiously attended upon by Michael, who hovered about him as though he were at the point of yielding up his last breath; but the Major was not himself. For once his casual air and his buoyancy forsook him.

"I came to tell you that we hope you will come over to-morrow—about five, if that will suit you?"

Mr. Jones, trying to hide the light that sprang to his eyes, the flush that mounted to his brow, by turning his back to the balcony, answered, that it would suit him very well.

"Suit him"—when every pulse in his body leapt and throbbed at the very thought of seeing her again. "Suit him"—why what hour in the whole twenty-four would not have "suited him"? The difficulty would be, not the suiting himself to that or any other hour, but how to get through the hours till that one sweet, supreme hour should come—how to hasten the pace of the time that would lag, lag and dawdle like the veriest snail. . . .

These were the thoughts that rushed like the lightning-flash across his mind.

What he said was this—always mindful of Jim, watchful and alert:

"Miss Graham, then, is—better?"

"Thanks, yes," said the Major, "she hopes to be able to go to the ball the 'Queen's' give to-morrow night at Verdala. It's warmish weather for such entertainments, isn't it? But, they're under orders, you know, and want to give a 'farewell flare up,' as our friend Dacre calls it. I see you have a card—"

This was not at all the kind of conversation the Major had intended to have with Mr. Jones; indeed, he had looked forward to touching delicately upon various business topics. But—there was that dreadful Jim.

"On guard" had to be the order of the day. Very silent was the Major as he conveyed the two boys down to the steps;

very hurried was his greeting and adieu to Captain Rowan and Vernon Halkett; very feebly did he "rise" to the latter's comments on the adventures of the day. Captain Rowan made no comments; and at any other time Major Clutterbuck might have noticed the pallor and silence of one who had been an habitué of his house so long, and for whom he knew his wife to entertain the highest regard.

As it was, he noted nothing; hurried the boys into a boat, and bade the rowers lose no time.

It was something new to Jim to see his father like that. No jests, no snatches of song, no sparkle; and Jim's young heart sank into his boots, for he knew not what such unwonted signs might, or might not, forebode. So he was silent, too, though very much on the alert, and holding Algie fast by the hand all the time. Jim might be a pickle, but he was also a brick, and as true as steel.

If sorrow was to result for this spree of theirs, then must he protect Algie, and take all the blame himself, since he deserved it all.

Algie, for his part, was tired out, and fell asleep with his head on Jim's arm. Strangely enough, the boys had never been missed; and Mrs. Clutterbuck uttered an exclamation of surprise as her husband stalked into the sitting-room, followed by the two culprits.

"Marion," said the Major, "those boys have too much scope. You do not check them as you ought."

Then he went quickly into his den, and shut the door.

"Now I wonder what that boy had been saying to Jones!" pondered the Major.

Anyway, at the present moment, "that boy" was volubly explaining to his horrified mother all about the visit to the Palace, and how pleasant "old Boggles" had made himself.

Meanwhile, in the breast-pocket of

Charley Rowan's tunic lay a crumpled-up letter. He had crammed it in after reading it—just once. He had received it early that morning—and now the golden light was paling—yet, he had never summoned up courage to read it a second time. A man who had read his death-warrant once, might be pardoned in that he should not wish to read it again. This was the letter:

"MY DEAR ONE,—For you must always be that to me—I am going to put your love to a bitter and cruel test. This is the only little letter like this I have ever written to you, and it must be the last. I am going to marry Mr. Jones. I cannot tell, even you, how it has all come about; but there is no other way—no other right way—and you must help me, you must, indeed, by not coming to see me, or writing to me. Anything like that would only weaken me, and could do no good.

"My dear—my dear—nothing can do any good—nothing! I will not ask you to forget that happy time; we can neither of us do that—*ever*. It will always be something to think of, but something put by, laid away—like a dead flower that is still sweet. Perhaps if you could go away for a time it might be best. If I do not hear your dear voice, or look in your dear face, I may be better able to bear the pain of losing you. You know we said our love was not to be a foolish, shallow thing, but a thing to help us both all the days of our lives; so you must help me now, and pray for me, Charley—pray that I may be a good wife to a good man, for, indeed, Mr. Jones is good, and noble, and true. Say, 'God bless my little sweetheart, and make her strong to do the right.' Say it often. And now good-bye, my darling—my darling. . . ."

There was no signature to this sad little letter.

Did it need one?

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"LOVEDAY."

By "RITA."

*Author of "Dame Durden," "Darby and Joan," "Gretchen,"
"The Laird o' Cookpen," etc.*

CHAPTER I. MORNING.

LOVEDAY sat on a ridge of the swelling sand-hills, watching the blue sea glistening in the sun, and the sweeping flight of the sea-gulls as they passed to and fro in their restless search for prey.

The sands, on which the little lazy waves were breaking, were white and firm, and strewn with lovely shells of strange tints and shapes. On either side of the curving coast were little bays and coves, and to the right of the hills where that little quiet figure sat so still, and so watchful in its self-sought solitude, towered a great and massive pile, called by the Cornish fisher folk the Gull Rock.

In the autumn and winter the coast was full of danger, and no place was more dangerous than this rock—for its base ran for a long distance under the smiling, treacherous sea, and even at low tide it was seldom uncovered.

How well Loveday knew it! Her baby eyes had rested on it as soon as they had rested on anything, with that early observance and wonder which her nurse called "taking notice." When she learnt to walk and was trusted to run alone on the firm, white sands, she seemed to have always set that rock before her as a sort of

goal, and to have toddled off in its direction with a reckless speed that soon brought her pert little nose into ignominious contact with mother earth.

Then when the little legs grew stronger and the steps more certain, and she could walk as far and as quickly as her old sailor foster-father, or even his stalwart son Dick, she still resolutely made for the same landmark—though as yet she had never quite reached it. Either the tide would not serve, or it took too long time to get there and back, or it was reckoned too dangerous a place for a little girl, or—well, there seemed no end to the number of excuses and difficulties—but the truth was that Loveday had never yet got to the Gull Rock, and that gradually it had become invested with a sort of superstitious fear and reverence in her childish mind.

To-day as she sat on the sand-hill hugging her knees in a somewhat ungraceful fashion, and letting those great blue eyes of hers rove from sea to sky and sky to cove, from the white clouds to the white wings of the restless birds, she took in also that great, dark, frowning pile and found herself wondering how it had ever come there, and how old it was; what strange scenes and sights it must have seen; what tales of storms and shipwreck it could tell if it could speak; and she wondered, too, if that evil and tricky spirit Tregagle, had ever really lived there, as the Cornish folk about her declared.

She had been fostered on legends and stories more or less weird and mysterious

ever since she could remember. Her foster-father, Richard Penywern, had a perfect store of them—and so had many of the old fisher folk in the little village—and as Loveday was a general favourite everywhere, and never so happy as when listening to stories of some sort, it was only natural that she should have learned and heard a good deal even in these ten years of her childhood.

She was a very happy little child, was Loveday, with a nature as bright and contented as her own little happy face, and a smile and a pleasant word for every one she met. She knew where the earliest primroses were hiding, and where the lovely little violets opened their dark-blue eyes, so like her own; and what songs the water-fairies sang under the little, cool, babbling streams; and where the glossy hart's-tongue uncurled itself in the shade of the green hedges; and where the thrushes built their nests, and the merry, chattering magpies met to gossip and talk over affairs of the bird kingdom—for all the world like a parcel of gossiping villagers on a market day. Yes, all these things Loveday knew, and delighted in, and it seemed to her that human life was bounded only by this Cornish village, and the blue sweeping sea beyond, and that nothing more beautiful or desirable could exist even in that vague "world" of which her books spoke, and of which the old sailor would tell in those long, winter evenings when the coast-guardsmen gathered round his fire, and she sat on Dick's knee in the chimney-corner, listening and wondering with all her childish soul.

But to-day Loveday thought or cared for no world beyond that on which she gazed. It was May-day, and she was ten years old; and every one who knew her in the village and at the little station high up there on the cliffs, had brought her some offering or keepsake in token of that event. For Loveday was a general favourite, in spite of the mystery about her, and her old foster-father's reticence on the point. She never remembered any other name but this, any other parents but the kindly old sailor and the sweet, sad-faced woman, his wife, who had died when she was four years old.

If she asked any questions of Dick, he only laughed, and said they would take care of her always; she need not fear. And her own happy disposition lent itself readily to content, and to accept without further question.

"Some day I'll tell you your history, Miss Loveday," the old man had said once, when she had asked him of her parents; and that "some day" was a vague and remote period for which she waited in simple faith.

And now she was ten years old. Ten years! She looked at the great, grim rock, and thought how many tens and tens of years it must have known.

And her thoughts ran on, speculating and imagining a hundred things, as they had a trick of doing when she was alone, or in some of her favourite haunts; for with all the child's brightness, and mirth, and mischief, there was a vein of thoughtfulness and gravity, and almost sadness, in the depths of her nature—something too vague to speak of, but which she herself keenly recognised. It threw its shadow over her when she was lonely, or in some mood like that of to-day—a mood altogether out of keeping with the summer brightness of sea and sky, and the warmth and fragrance of the air. In these moods her childish senses seemed to shapen into distaste and fastidiousness; she thought Dick coarse, and the kindly old coast-guard rough, and her surroundings poor, and her dress ugly and common. Why, she could not tell. But these ideas would crowd in upon her.

Perhaps the summer visitors had something to do with it—ladies who came in carriages, with pretty children, some of her own age and size, who seemed to speak a different language, and belong to a different world to that which she knew. They would run about the station, and ask her questions about the tall flag-staff, and the Gull Rock, and the old, ivy-covered church in the valley below; but they always seemed to treat her as one of the sailors' children, and she knew herself that in instinct and taste she was every whit as much a lady as any of those dainty, doll-like, frilled and flounced young damsels who looked askance, and tossed their golden curls, and displayed their superiority in a score of ways.

Her little mind was very full of these things on this May-day, for the village was all astir with the news of some great folk who had taken the old, deserted house called St. Perran, just a mile beyond the village itself, but whose moss-grown turrets and quaint old gables she could see so well from the little station on its vantage ground of cliff.

No one had occupied it for years; but

now it was being cleaned, and repaired, and put in order, and as soon as it was ready these people were to come there.

Loveday found herself wondering what they would be like, and how many children there would be to run about those great, wild, delicious gardens which she knew so well, for the gardener's wife lived at the lodge, and was very fond of her, and had often taken her over the grounds, and part of the house, too. Of course, now she would not be able to go there any more.

She gave a little sigh as she thought of it, and the sigh was echoed by a sharp, sudden yelp, so close to her that she started, and sprang to her feet with a little terrified cry.

There was nothing very alarming, only a small white dog of a kind she had never seen, with thick, silky coat, and a white ruff of hair standing round its neck, and a collar with little silver bells, that rang and tinkled with its every movement.

It stood close beside her on the ridge of the sand-hill, looking at her with bright, dark eyes, and a defiant, yet somewhat uncertain, expression. Loveday, who loved all dumb animals as she loved the birds and flowers, and the blue sea, and the dancing waves, and had no sort of fear of anything, immediately held out her hand and made friendly overtures to the stranger. At first he received them with doubt, as befitted a canine gentleman brought up in select and aristocratic circles. Gradually, however, he seemed to make up his mind that she was not dangerous or aggressive, and came a little nearer, and actually permitted the little brown hands to caress his silky coat, and to pat his graceful head, and listened, with pleased self-consciousness, to her admiring words.

"I wonder to whom you belong, you pretty fellow," said Loveday, admiringly.

She had never seen such a beautiful dog, and she was sure no one in the village owned him. She looked at his collar, and saw a name engraved on it, which, after much difficulty, she made out to be "Ruff." He answered readily to the name, and ran about and capered round her with great glee and good humour. Still no owner appeared in search of him, and Loveday wondered what to do.

Finally, she thought she would go to the village with him, and ask there if any visitors or strangers had arrived, to whom the dog might belong. He followed her

readily enough, and even permitted her to carry him when the way was very rough and stony.

When she reached the village she found the whole place keeping "May-day" in the Cornish fashion. A long procession of young men and girls carrying wreaths and garlands were dancing in and out of the houses, singing and laughing in most uproarious style. The long procession looked very odd as it wound in and out of all the houses and shops. Every door stood open, and no one gainsayed the intrusion. Loveday stood a little aside, clasping the dog in her arms and looking at the strange scene with her big violet eyes.

Suddenly, a voice spoke to her in imperious, domineering fashion. "Hullo! little girl," it said, "what are you doing with my dog?"

Ruff, hearing it, whined and struggled in her arms, and finally wriggled out and threw himself in ecstasy upon the speaker. He was a boy of some fourteen years, dark, handsome, tall; and the little girl looked at him with surprise and admiration, as a new order of being, and one wholly different to the specimens of boyhood with whom she was acquainted.

"Is he your dog?" she said, not shyly, but with the coolness and ease which were part of her natural fearlessness. "I found him a long way off, by the sea. I brought him here to ask if any one in the village knew where he had come from. I'm very glad you have found him."

"So am I," he said, patting the little dog's head and bidding him be quiet. "I don't know how he got away. I suppose he doesn't know his way about very well yet. We only came here yesterday."

"Oh," said Loveday, looking critically at him, and wondering who he was, and why he wore such grand clothes and had a watch and chain, for all the world like a grown-up man.

"Yes," continued the boy, glancing in the direction of the laughing, dancing crowd, "we've come to that big house down there—St. Perran. At least, I've come, and my sisters and their governess. My parents don't appear till we're all straight."

"Oh!" said Loveday again, feeling as if she were hearing a new language.

But she liked the frank, handsome, boyish face, and even the somewhat haughty manner charmed her, as the superiority of some young Prince might

have done. How grand he was, and how handsome! She had never seen any one in the least like him.

"What are all these people doing?" he asked, presently.

She explained the custom, and told him that every house door must stand open on this May-day, and no one could refuse admission to these merry-makers; that they would dance and feast till evening.

"It's very rum," he said, in his school-boy phraseology.

And Loveday, who only knew that word as expressing a liquor made into grog for the old coastguardsmen in the winter evenings, said:

"Do you think so?" and wondered, in her childish mind, what "rum" had to do with the procession.

"Which is the nearest way to the sea?" the boy asked, presently. "Do you mind showing me?"

The little girl acquiesced at once, and led the way back to the sand-hills, with Ruff dancing and curvetting about them both as if glad to see his master and his new friend on such excellent terms. They began to talk quite confidentially by-and-by. He told Loveday his name, which she thought as beautiful as that of a fairy Prince, though it was only Guy Ruthven, and related a whole family history, which she cared very little about. It appeared, though, that the old house, St. Perran, had been left to the boy's father by some recently-deceased relative, and that they were all coming to live there for a time, at all events, if the place agreed with his mother, who, from his account, was very delicate.

"And where do you live?" he asked Loveday, in his patronising, boyish way, when he had talked about his own affairs in a manner calculated to impress her with his importance.

She pointed in the direction of the coastguard's station.

"Over there," she said, briefly.

"Oh, how jolly!" cried the boy. "I do love a coastguard's place; may I come there? Will they let me see through their telescopes, and climb the flag-staff?"

"I don't know," said Loveday, doubtfully. "They never let me."

"Oh, but you're a girl; that's quite different. Here, let's run over there now; it doesn't look far. What's your governor—father, I mean? One of the men?"

"No," said Loveday, "not my real father. Only I've lived here always, and I call him dad."

"Then you're not a coastguard's child?" said the boy, rather disappointedly.

She shook her head. Her birth and mode of life had never troubled her; but she was sorry this young aristocrat was not pleased with them.

"Oh, I thought you were, and that you might help me, you know. But I suppose I shall manage; I can 'tip' them," he added, grandly.

"What's that?" asked Loveday, lifting her big blue eyes to his face with a puzzled look.

He laughed.

"What a funny little girl you are! Why, my sisters could beat you into fits, and they're not as old—at least, I don't know how old you are; but you look about ten, I fancy."

"I'm ten to-day; this is my birthday," said Loveday, proudly.

"Is it? Oh, if I had known I'd have given you a present. Stop a moment; perhaps I've got something in my pocket."

He thrust his hand into first one and then another of those convenient receptacles, bringing out various curious and, to all intents and purposes, useless articles, such as broken knives, cobbler's wax, pencil stumps, coloured crayons, india-rubber, toffee, some coppers, and, finally, a battered sixpence with a hole in it.

"Bother," he said, rather ruefully, "I really thought I had some tin; but I suppose I've spent it. Would you—would you take this for luck? It was awfully good of you to try and find Ruff's owner. See, it's got a hole in it, and if you put a bit of cord or ribbon through, and wear it round your neck, you'll always be lucky, and never want money—at least, that's what my old nurse said when she gave it me."

"Thank you," said the child, gravely, as she took the battered and defaced coin from his hand; "I'll wear it always."

He laughed.

"Oh, not when you're grown up, of course. You'll be having different keepsakes then; but just now in memory of me—and Ruff—you know."

"Yes," she said, again, in her simple, straightforward fashion.

She kept the coin in her hand, and they went on again, chatting and laughing with great friendliness until they reached the coastguard's station.

The old sailor, Loveday's foster-father, was standing by the flag-staff. As the

child ran eagerly towards him, she saw that he was not alone. Some one was standing there beside him. A stranger—tall, handsome, grave-looking—with eyes that were like her own, and a face strangely sad and stern; and yet it was so young a face, despite the lines about the eyes and mouth, and despite even the threads of grey in the fair hair, and the soft, drooping moustache.

The child stopped abruptly and looked at him, and he looked at her, sadly, yearningly, and yet as if not wholly glad to see her what she was.

Then suddenly he bent towards her, and she felt his lips, cold and trembling, on her soft, flushed cheeks.

"You do not know me," he said, hoarsely, and with effort. "But I have come to see you at last. I am your father—Loveday."

CHAPTER II. AFTERNOON.

It was very quiet and dreary in the old house, even on this bright May afternoon, and one room of it seemed absolutely deserted by the sunshine that fell across the newly-trimmed lawn, and the great, spreading cedar boughs, and through the slanting branches of the elm-trees on which the window looked.

It was a deep bay-window, with a wide, old-fashioned seat, and a woman sat there, gazing sadly and listlessly out at the tangled wilderness of shrubs and bushes which for long had known no tendance save that of Nature.

She was not young, though face and figure were youthful; but the lines of the one and the drooping weariness of the other spoke of a burden of sorrow and trouble which carried the weight of actual years.

Some faces betray nothing; others tell a story whose hidden pathos even an unobservant gaze may read.

This woman's face told some such story, now that it wore no mask and feared no observation—the story of passionate warfare, of a nature ever at war with itself, of sorrows deep and bitter, and pain suppressed, yet never quite evaded.

She sat there now as she so often sat when alone, gazing with unseeing eyes on the scene before her, wondering if ever again those eyes would take joy in the sunlight, or the dancing leaves, or the blue of sky or sea. From the shrubbery behind

came the sound of children's voices, sweet and careless as the spring song of the blackbirds, ringing out gay laughter of gayer youth; youth which to the quiet listener seemed so strange and far-off a thing.

The wistful look of her eyes deepened into pain; she turned away, and going over to the table littered with school-books and papers, she leant her head on her folded arms as if trying to shut out the sounds and sights beyond.

Now and then she sighed—the deep, broken sighs of a grief beyond tears to quench, or prayers to lighten. The grief the burden of which lay always—always, on that aching heart, unshared by any sympathy, uncared for by any living soul. Her thoughts had turned into old channels—and ran their dreary course unchecked.

"I brought my own misery on my own head. . . . But oh, Heaven! for a little peace—a little forgetfulness. Was my sin so great that its punishment must be so heavy? So many years have dragged themselves along, and yet. . . can I never hear a little child's laugh without this stab of pain, or see the spring-tide bloom afresh without that memory to rise and face me also, as keen and sharp in its torture as if but a thing of yesterday? Surely tears, grief, loneliness, might win me some mercy. But there seems none—none! Heaven and man alike are pitiless!"

Darker and darker the shadows gathered around that dark and dreary room. The flush and glow of sunset threw no ray of light within. The quiet figure still sat there—motionless, save for those deep, shuddering sighs that seemed the echo of more sorrowful thoughts.

For others life might be bright, joyous, welcome as a spring morning. To her it would be always—afternoon.

Loveday's little brain was full of perplexity and wonder.

Had he dropped from the clouds, this handsome stranger who had proclaimed himself her father? Why had he hidden himself all these years, and then only appeared to vanish again? True, he had said that he was coming back soon—very soon—and that then he would take her with him, and they would live in some beautiful far-off place which he pictured as a sort of fairy-land to her childish eyes, and then they should never be separated any more. But "soon" seemed a vague and far-away thing

to the child when she was once more left alone, and her old foster-father and his son seemed even more common and coarse in their ways after the sight, and speech, and gravely gentle ways of her newly discovered father.

She had been strangely shy with him. She had not ventured to ask why for so long he had not been to see her, or why she must still remain here instead of going away with him at once to that vague and beautiful world where he lived. No; none of these or a hundred other questions had she asked that now occurred to her. Yet for one whole day they had been together—a day she thought she would never forget. Her father had driven her for miles and miles into the beautiful green country, and they had stayed at some quaint little town the name of which she could not remember, and she had feasted on all sorts of dainties, and had come home laden with toys, and books of fairy tales, such as her childish soul delighted in; and as they had driven back in the sweet, spring evening, he had told her wonderful stories, and she had prattled to him of her innocent, happy life, and its trivial incidents and occupations. And then that night he had slept at the little white stone house which was her home; but when she woke in the morning, and dressed, and hurried to his room to ask for him, she found he had left.

He had gone—that wonderful stranger, than whom no fairy Prince could have seemed handsomer or more beneficent. Gone without even a good-bye!

For Loveday had slept soundly, and midnight had not betrayed any secret to her close-shut eyes, nor had her dreams been visited by any vision that silently and sadly stood beside her little white bed and gazed longingly down at the flushed, sweet cheeks, swept by long curled lashes, and the tumbled brown hair tossed so carelessly about the pillow. No, she knew nothing of these things; still less of the tears which had suddenly and strangely dimmed those stern, sad eyes; or that swift impulse which had bent proud knees and prouder heart in humbled prayer at her side. Nor could the angels, in whom she so firmly believed as watching round her bed, carry to her sleeping senses any echo of the passionate cry that sprang from heart to lips in that solemn midnight hour: "Heaven bless you, oh my little child—my little child, so deeply wronged!"

The lovely, sunny springtime drifted by. Loveday lived in it and enjoyed it as keenly as ever. Sometimes in her rambles she met Ruff and his young master, and they joined company and sought for primroses and ferns in the hedgerows; or ran races in the green fields, or sat quietly by some babbling rill reading fairy tales, or listening to each other's uneventful histories.

They had become great friends, these two: sharing sweetmeats, and books, and other interesting possessions in which youth delights with a magnanimity and good-will that spoke well for their feelings. Loveday had confided to Guy that eventful episode of her father's visit, and he had agreed with her that it was strange that he should not have taken her away, or fixed a definite time for his return. Together they speculated as to who or what he was, and the boy, out of some unsuspected chivalry not often peculiar to boyhood, forbore to throw any damper on her fanciful and somewhat extravagant theories as to the station, rank, and fortune of the wonderful stranger. Sometimes they wandered along the sands, or peered into the damp and slippery recesses of the many caves which had once been noted haunts of smugglers. Once, even, they had got as far as the Gull Rock; but the tide had thought fit to place an impassable barrier between that coveted eminence and its youthful would-be explorers, and they had reluctantly given up the idea.

"Is it ever covered by the sea?" asked the boy of his little companion, as they watched the waves curling and dashing at its base, and the gulls dreading and whirling to and fro.

"Only in a great storm; or if there is a tide—equi—equi—something," said the child, with a confused memory of old Penywern's explanations. "I believe they have only seen it covered three times here. Mustn't it be beautiful up there?" she added, longingly; "right on the top, where the birds are sitting, and the waves can't reach you. How I should like to be there!"

"Not very easy, or a very nice place to get to," said the boy, throwing pebbles at the birds in an aimless, lazy fashion. "Well, it wouldn't be much good trying to-day, at all events, so we may as well go home. Why——" and he broke off suddenly, and looked somewhat annoyed. "Here are my sisters coming along, and their governess. Bother!"

"You don't seem pleased," said Loveday. "Aren't you fond of them?"

"Oh, they're well enough," was the gracious response. "Only I—— Well, I didn't want to meet them; that's all."

He couldn't very well say that the haughty and faultlessly-attired little maidens would probably have various cutting and sarcastic remarks ready by tea-time in compliment of his choice in the matter of acquaintances, or that he had refused to accompany them in their walk this very afternoon, because he "didn't want to be bothered with a pack of chattering girls." And now the trio were upon him, and he could but put the best face on the matter, and greet them with the brotherly ease and contempt he was far from feeling.

"Halloo! what brought you all here?" he said; while Loveday stood there beside him, gazing with unwonted curiosity at the pretty pink cotton frocks, so different to her own rough, sea-stained serge, and the smart sailor-hats, and the carefully-plaited tails, which put her own curling, tumbled locks to shame.

"Why shouldn't we walk on the sands as well as you?" said his eldest sister, glancing scornfully at the little fisher-girl, as she imagined her.

"Oh, of course," said the boy, reddening and fidgeting as he noticed the glance. "Well, I was just going back—so—so good-bye."

"We are going back also," said Maudie, the youngest girl, "aren't we, Mrs. Cassilis?" she added, appealing to the governess.

But Mrs. Cassilis was looking at Loveday, and did not seem to hear. Her face, delicate, and worn, and indescribably sad, was ashy white; her dark eyes had a strained and almost terrified look. Involuntarily her hand was pressed tight to her heart, as if to still some pain whose sudden sharpness hurt her.

Loveday noticed the pallor, and the action, though the other children had seen neither.

"Are you ill?" she asked, quickly; and the sweet, childish voice seemed to bring a sudden calmness and strength to the startled woman.

Her pupils turned to her at once, surprise and anxiety on the small, upturned faces.

"How white you are, Mrs. Cassilis! Is anything the matter?" asked the staid and stately Blanche.

With a great effort the trembling woman composed herself.

"No, my dear—nothing; only we have walked rather quickly, and I was tired," she answered. "We had better be going home now, I think."

The trio turned at once. Guy sauntered off at their heels with a would-be unconscious air, which yet had in it something of shame. Loveday stood looking at her and him in surprise.

The pale, sad-faced governess came nearer.

"Will you walk with me?" she asked.

"I—I should like to talk to you."

Loveday's big bright eyes flashed wonderingly up at the speaker.

"Yes," she said, readily; "but why has Guy left? And why did his sisters look so strange?"

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Cassilis, "they were wondering who you were."

"They could have asked me then," said the child, curtly.

"They would not like to appear curious," said her new acquaintance, as they moved on side by side. "Will you tell me your name?" she added, gently, and with a certain hesitation that did not escape Loveday's quick observance.

"I'm only Loveday," she said, simply.

The delicate face grew a shade paler.

"Loveday—what a pretty name. Is it—Cornish?"

"I don't know," said the child. "No one ever told me."

"Have you no other name? Where are your parents?"

"I've always lived here," she answered. "Up there," and she nodded in the direction of the cliff, where the cottages of the coast-guard stood in a white cluster. "I'm not Daddy Penywern's child, though," she added. "My real father is a grand gentleman, handsome, and tall, and rich. I've only seen him once; but he's coming here again soon, and will take me away altogether."

"But surely you know his name?" said her interlocutor.

The child shook her pretty, brown head, looking up at the pale, set face above her with eyes so strangely like to eyes that belonged to the past; eyes that had once looked with love and tenderness, and all a man's strong, passionate devotion, into those brown depths for ever shadowed now by the memory of sorrow and of wrong, self-wrought and repented of in vain.

The woman shivered, and her face grew even paler than before as that little negative shake silenced further enquiry.

"Tell me all about yourself," she said, holding out her hand.

She had taken off her gloves, and the touch of those small warm fingers clasping hers so frankly, sent a strange thrill of tenderness through her veins. Loveday chattered on in her childish, fearless fashion. Yet ever and again some trick of speech or manner, some turn of head, or glance from those deep, fringed eyes, woke fresh memories in the quiet listener's heart, or stabbed it with fresh pain and sharper torture.

Suddenly she knelt down on the firm, white sands, and drew the little childish figure to her heart.

"Kiss me, child," she cried, passionately. "Oh, don't look so frightened. I only ask it for the sake of—of a little child like yourself, Loveday, whom I once held in my arms long ago. Dear Heaven, how long ago!"

A sob broke from her panting breast, and Loveday stood, half frightened, half pitiful, in the shelter of her arms, vaguely wondering at the tears that dimmed those beseeching eyes.

With that pity and that wonder lending fresh beauty to her own, she softly kissed the quivering lips which for so many weary years had known no touch of love, or caress of tenderness.

"Oh, don't cry," she said. "Was that little girl yours?"

But there was no answer as the kneeling figure rose and once more took its way along the quiet sands.

Loveday moved silently along beside the woman. Neither of them spoke.

CHAPTER III. NIGHT.

A KEEN sense of injury and injustice was vexing Loveday's little soul. Month after month had rolled by—springtide, summer, autumn—but no word or sign came to her of that mysterious father; nor did he seem in any haste to redeem his promise of return.

No one would have guessed how deeply the child suffered; how in every childish prayer that name lived and formed the groundwork of a petition, the simple faith of which was inexpressibly touching. But no answer came.

Almost every week—sometimes oftener—she saw that strange and sad-faced governess from St. Perran.

Guy had gone to a school, but the two younger girls had made friends with Loveday, and she had been invited to tea in the schoolroom several times. Miss Blanche was still lofty and aggressive in manner, as became her dignity and station; but Loveday was neither awed nor impressed by her airs.

She liked to go to the queer old house, to ramble through the garden and orchard, to play in the dim, ghostly-looking schoolroom, or sit in the wide old window-seat listening to Mrs. Casall's low, sweet voice as she read or told them fairy tales and legends in the twilight. It was strange how fond she had grown of that sad and quiet woman, though there was almost always something of awe in the affection, and an unusual reticence in its display from one of Loveday's bright and loving nature.

Now the heat and glory of summer were over, and the brown woods were growing bare which had been so thick with leaves, and gay with song. The little maiden sighed as day after day marked its change in the dying year, and something of its sadness and gloom began to fall upon herself, and lent wistfulness to the violet eyes which still each morning and each night looked longingly over cliff and headland to where the coach road stretched away into some vague region, from whence she hoped and looked for that mysterious stranger's return.

One afternoon the child wandered off to her favourite sands. The tide was out, and the firm, white expanse tempted her farther and farther, till at last she found herself opposite the Gull Rock. Wonderful to relate, the passage to it was easy and safe to-day. The long ridge, slippery with seaweed, and interspersed with little pools of sea-water, ran clear from the sands to the base of the great rough prominence. Without hesitation or thought, but with a little glad cry of surprise and delight, the child made her way along the treacherous pathway, and in a very few moments had reached that long-coveted haven, and commenced to climb its rough and dangerous height.

Midway up she started and gave a faint cry of surprise, for standing on a plateau of the rock that made a sort of platform, was a woman's figure. The face was turned seawards, but Loveday knew that slight form with its weary grace, and the simple black draperies that the wind fluttered to and fro. At her cry the

woman turned, echoing its wonder in her own hurried exclamation :

"Loveday ! you here—why, child, how ever did you get to such a place !"

And Loveday told of her long desire and ambition to scale the heights of the Gull Rock, and how she had heard the sailors say that when once the tide left it accessible it was safe for hours, and half coaxing, half persuading, she induced Mrs. Cassilis to climb higher and higher up the steep and rocky heights.

On they went, sometimes hand-in-hand, sometimes apart ; Loveday light and sure-footed, and springing from place to place with merry laughter and glee. But what was easy to her agile frame and fearless spirit was a different and more difficult matter to the weary woman encumbered with heavy garments, and already spent and tired with the long walk here. Loveday was far off, and within close distance of the goal she had set herself, when a sharp cry of pain startled her. She stopped and looked back, and saw Mrs. Cassilis lying prostrate on the rough stones some way below.

In a second she was beside the fallen woman, who, faint and scarcely conscious, vainly tried to rise or reassure the frightened child.

"It's my ankle," she said, faintly. "Oh, Loveday, I'm afraid it's broken ; I sprang on to that stone, and it turned with me, and then my foot seemed to give way."

She turned ghastly white to her very lips, and Loveday, terrified and helpless, stood there wondering what could be done.

"I shall never be able to walk," moaned the unfortunate woman ; "you must leave me here, dear, and go back for assistance."

"Go back !" Loveday looked at the helpless figure, and its desolate surroundings. Her little heart swelled with grief and sympathy, and the tears gathered in her eyes. "Oh, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry ! If it hadn't been for me——"

"Nonsense, dear ! you're not to blame ; it was my own stupidity. But we mustn't waste time, child. Can I trust you to run back and ask some of the men at the coastguard station to come and help me !"

The child looked round at the desolate spot. The sun was setting already ; thick banks of clouds were gathering southwards ; the sea looked grey and angry, and the birds were whirling and screaming around the rock in an ominous fashion, as if they feared a coming storm.

But there was nothing to be done ; the child saw that, and braced her energies for the occasion.

"Can't I help you down to a better place ?" she entreated, as she looked at the damp and broken pile of rock on which the unfortunate woman lay.

"No, no, I can't move," she said, faintly. "Hasten now, dearie. There's no help for it ; I must stay here till you send assistance."

Then Loveday, moved by some sudden impulse, put her warm young arms round the suffering woman's neck and kissed her passionately and tenderly.

"I'll be as quick as ever I can," she said ; and so turned and climbed down the slippery, uneven ways, and crossed that dark, fin-like ridge, and, once on the sands, ran as her little feet had never run before, for never before had terror and anxiety lent them wings as now.

Those sad and patient eyes watched the little figure with a look that even the hopelessness of pain could not extinguish.

"She—might have been just as sweet, as loving, as lovely," she murmured, bitterly. "If it should be," she cried, aloud. "She is so like, so strangely, terribly like ! . . . But I shall never know now, the secret has been too well kept ; and yet— Oh, Derrick, I never thought you could be so hard, so cruel, just for sake of a few wild words—a threat I never meant, a fit of passion—brief, and soon repented of. . . . And all these weary, hopeless years to pay the penalty—and suspense, cruel as death itself, and that aching, aching void for ever in my heart ! And yet, for all my pride, and all my reproaches, I loved you so. . . . And now— Well, it is all over, all finished, Derrick ; and you will never know how sorry I was, or how gladly now I would creep to your feet as humbly as even you could wish, just to hear you say, 'I forgive you'—just to know the fate of my little child."

Her head drooped ; the white lips grew whiter ; pain, sharp and torturing, taxed beyond all limits her already weakened powers of endurance. With one deep, shuddering sigh she sank back on the hard, rough rocks—insensible.

How long the way seemed to Loveday ! How tired she felt ! The sky was growing darker every moment, and the wind more keen and chill. Panting and breathless she at last reached the little cottage, and dashed

impetuously through its open doorway, and into the little firelit parlour.

"Daddy!" she cried, wildly.

Then suddenly voice and strength seemed to forsake her. For there in the dusk a tall figure stood, and held out welcoming arms, and all memory of anything or any one was lost as, with a cry glad and sweet as that of nestling bird, she flew into that long-coveted embrace, sobbing out the name which had lived in her memory and faltered in her prayers so many weary months.

"Oh, father! father! You have come back—you have come back!"

Swiftly the moments sped away. Outside, beyond the firelight and warmth of the little parlour, the storm gathered, and the leaden clouds grew darker. But Loveday had forgotten her errand, and sat there on her fairy Prince's knee, listening to his voice, gazing into his face, her little heart throbbing and beating madly with the great joy and the greater wonder of his presence.

Suddenly memory returned. She sprang from his knee with a little terrified cry.

"Oh, where is Daddy!" she cried, wildly. "Oh, father, how wicked of me. I forgot everything, and the poor lady—she is lying out there on the Gull Rock. She can't move, her leg is broken. Oh, they must send the boat for her and bring her here."

She flew off into the kitchen, where old Penywern and Dick were seated, and poured out her tale to them with passionate incoherence.

They looked at one another, grave and anxious.

"The tide will be up," said Dick. "Twill be rare and difficult getting the boat near the rock, and there's a storm rising, too."

"But some one must go," said the stranger, who had followed Loveday in her sudden flight. "Can I help you?" he asked, eagerly. "I'm a good oarsman, and can manage a boat fairly well, and if, as the child says, the lady has met with an accident, you'll need strong arms to carry her down that awful place."

"Yes, you're right, sir, and you're welcome to come along if you don't mind a bit of rough sea. Bring the lantern, Dick, and some rope. Come, there's no time to lose."

They hurried off, and Loveday stood at the gate of the little cottage, watching

them launch the boat, and wondering how the poor lady was, yet too glad of heart in her own innocent joy to have room for any forebodings.

Presently the rain and wind drove her within doors, and she went back to her little low chair by the fire, and lost herself in happy, bewildering dreams of all that was in store for her.

The old clock struck half-hour—hour—half-hour—hour; but the time did not seem long, nor was she lonely. Yet three hours had passed before sound of steps and voices reached her ears, and three drenched and forlorn-looking figures staggered into the warm, bright kitchen, carrying a limp and helpless form, which they laid on the wide, old-fashioned settle.

Loveday sprang hastily up. The woman who took charge of her and kept the little cottage in order, was already there and stooping over the stiff and motionless figure. She unloosed her cloak and removed the soaked and dripping bonnet.

The child put her warm, flushed face against that white and rigid one. The loosened hair—brown and wavy like her own—fell in a heavy mass around it.

"How cold she is!" cried Loveday, shrinking in sudden terror from that chill contact.

As she did so the light fell full upon the woman's face, and revealed it to the gaze of that one rescuer, who, all unconsciously, had faced peril, hardship, almost death to-night to save her.

He sprang to her side, and his face was scarcely less white than her own as he gazed, half in terror, half in incredulous fear, anger, compassion at the rigid form and closed eyes.

"Great Heaven!" he cried below his breath; "to meet at last, and like this!"

"Who is she, father? Do you know her?" cried Loveday, wonderingly.

He did not answer, only stepped aside and motioned to the woman to resume her offices. Old Penywern and he left the kitchen then, and Dick hurried off for the doctor.

But long before he arrived they knew that his journey would be useless. Cold, pain, and exposure had done their work too well. The weakened frame, and weaker heart, had no power to rally from the shock.

Awestruck and frightened, Loveday crept into the room where her father and the old sailor were talking.

"The child knows nothing!" she heard

old Penywern say. "Surely, sir, she need know nothing now."

"I will take her away with me," her father answered. "Strange that in this out-of-the-way corner of the world Fate should have destined such a meeting."

"Stranger still that the poor lady should never have known whose child she was so fond of," said the old Cornishman. "You'll forgive her, now, sir. I'm sure she's known suffering and sorrow. Her face shows that."

"I forgive her, Heaven knows," he said, huskily. "She broke my heart, and ruined my home, and made my child motherless; but, perhaps I was too hard, too exacting. Neither of us was faultless."

A little hand touched his softly; a little face, pale and wistful, looked up to his own. He knelt down and drew the child into his arms, and bowed his head on the soft brown curls.

"Have you come to comfort me, Loveday? Shall we face life together, you and I?"

There was no answer save the mute caress of the childish lips, the clinging touch of the childish arms.

Loveday never asked and never knew more of her history.

A HOUSE OF ECHOES.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

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CHAPTER I.

It stood on the edge of one of the bleakest of the bleak Yorkshire moors—a square-built, unpretending house, surrounded by a small garden, in the midst of which a big board proclaimed that "this desirable family residence" was to be let or sold. The fact had been thus proclaimed for so many years that its owner had begun to despair of ever finding a tenant for it. The house had somehow got for itself an ill name. Its latest occupant had been a man of surly temper, who had lived the life of a recluse, and who had one morning been found lying dead in his bed. To these facts in course of time the usual element of the weird and supernatural had been linked by the good people of the widely-scattered hamlet, and belated drovers and farm labourers, who had occasion to cross the moor after nightfall, were wont to testify to all sorts of unearthly noises which they

averred had proceeded from the house as they passed.

Mr. Simon Geldart knew something of all this when he bought the house on his return to England after twenty years' absence in America. He had been born within fifteen miles of the place, and Yorkshire air suited him. Also he had sundry investments in certain collieries in the neighbourhood which wanted looking after. Last and most weighty consideration of all, it was to be had at a low figure. Mr. Geldart, although a wealthy man, looked twice at a penny before he spent it, and when he heard from his Yorkshire correspondents that the house could be had for next to nothing, he laughed at its ill repute, said to himself that a bargain was a bargain any day of the week, and there and then settled the matter.

Simon Geldart had cut himself adrift from home and home ties as a young man, and had sailed away to the New World with one fixed resolve in his mind—that of making money and rising in life. To this end he had worked early and worked late, kept himself clear of love-making, alms-giving, and kindred follies, and by the time he was fifty years of age had attained his heart's desire. Then his health had begun to fail; the doctors advised rest, change, recreation.

Mr. Geldart thought to himself that with "rest, change, and his native air," he might combine a little business, look after sundry of his English investments—notably those Yorkshire collieries which had given him some little anxiety—and search out the relatives who remained to him, and see if among them he could find a niece, who might, should necessity arise, be found willing to fill the responsible post of nurse and housekeeper to him.

Of these relatives, by his own choice, he knew next to nothing. He had had but one brother, Dick, a hare-brained scamp of a fellow, and from that brother some five years back had come a pathetic little message—sent from his death-bed—begging his dear brother Simon to look after his wife and children. The letter had been laid on one side and had faded from his memory, until his possible need some day for a nurse had recalled to his mind the fact that "Mrs. Dick"—as he had mentally christened his brother's widow—had a quiverful of children.

Thus it came about one morning that Mrs. Dick, seated in the morning-room of

her little house at Hampstead, with a pile of unremended garments before her, and a packet of unpaid tradesmen's bills at her right hand, was startled by the announcement that Mr. Simon Geldart, of Chicago, wished to see her.

Mrs. Geldart went into her drawing-room to be greeted, not a little abruptly, by a small, very thin, very sallow, very sharp-featured gentleman, with the words:

"So you are Dick's widow!"

This abrupt exclamation was only the prelude to a string of questions equally curt and unceremonious, and Mrs. Geldart grew more and more nervous.

"I wish Aileen were at home," she thought, feeling how much more easily her bright, light-hearted eldest daughter would acquit herself in the circumstances.

Aloud she said: "Of course you will like to see Dick's children?"

"That depends. What are they like? How many are there to see?"

"Ten," she answered, with the ghost of a smile. "Aileen is the eldest—just twenty. She is small, slight, dark; pretty, they say—"

"Who comes next?" interrupted Uncle Simon.

"Dick—just sixteen. We lost two between him and Aileen." And here the mother's voice faltered.

"What a mercy!" he ejaculated under his breath.

"Then come twins, Harry and Jack," continued the lady, not hearing the ejaculation, "and then Milly, then Ernest, then Madge, then Tiny—"

"For Heaven's sake, stop!" he cried. "Do you think I can carry all those names in my head?"

"I'll go and fetch some of them," said the mother, thinking that her pretty curly darlings could not fail to make an indelible impression on the rich uncle's memory.

"Stop," again he cried. "Small children and rowdy boys are my abomination. I'll make the acquaintance of your elder ones, but it must be in my own fashion."

Then he went on to say that he had bought a house in the country—on the Yorkshire moors—and would like his eldest niece to stay there with him for a time.

"She can keep house for me—I hope, by the way, that you've taught her to be thrifty, and a good manager—and prevent my being robbed by the servants, and tradespeople, and—"

But at that moment the door opened,

and the eldest niece, bright and fresh from a morning's walk, came in.

She was, as her mother had said, small and slight, with hair black and glossy as a raven's wing, and large dark eyes which could say just whatever she chose them to say. They said an undeniable demur when her uncle's invitation was told her with many grateful expressions by her mother.

Her uncle's sharp face and sharper voice did not fascinate her, and the prospect of even a week's stay with him in a lonely country house was not attractive.

"I must ask Tom first," she said, her clear dark skin flushing a deep crimson.

"Who on earth is Tom?" asked the uncle, sharply, turning to Mrs. Geldart.

Before she could explain that "Tom" was the Rev. Thomas Trevor, the curate of the parish, to whom Aileen was engaged to be married, the girl had disappeared.

It was the old, old story. Tom and Aileen had been thrown together at church decorations, and in parish work. He was a handsome, stalwart young fellow of six-and-twenty, and would have looked every whit as well in a gold-braided uniform with a sword at his side as he did in his white surplice, with its bachelor's hood.

So it came about one Christmas Eve, when the church had been made as ugly as holly, red flannel, and cotton wool at times can make it, and Aileen, with her hammer and nails, was descending a flight of steps, that Tom took her hand in his to help her down. He grasped it so tightly, however, that she exclaimed: "Oh, you've hurt my hand." Upon which he replied: "Not half so much as you've hurt my heart," and the thing was done.

There could be no denying that, looked at from a pecuniary point of view, the engagement was a highly imprudent one. Mrs. Geldart seemed for the first time to see the full measure of its imprudence as she sat answering her brother-in-law's sharp, short questions respecting "Tom" and his "prospecta." Aileen had so few pleasures in her girl's life that the mother had not had the heart to forbid a lover to her, more especially a lover with Tom's genial ways and good heart. Now, however, when Uncle Simon, in cold, contemptuous tones, discussed the affair, she began to feel ashamed of herself for having given her sanction to what he was pleased to call "a piece of arrant folly."

"The father is a country rector, you say, with five other sons to provide for," he

exclaimed. "Good goodness! It must be broken off at once, or I'll have nothing more to do with any of you."

The mother did not dare to repeat these and kindred speeches verbatim to Aileen; but when in due course there came a letter from Uncle Simon, formally inviting the girl to spend a month with him on the Yorkshire moors, she waxed eloquent over the advantages which might accrue to the whole family if only the uncle's favour could be secured.

"Think of me, Aileen, and my life of toil in the vain endeavour to make both ends meet," she pleaded. "Think of your brothers who want schooling; your little sisters who want clothes."

"They shouldn't want for a single thing, any one of them, if I could help it," exclaimed Tom, who chanced to be present. Then he pathetically turned his pockets inside out to show how empty they were. "I'm not extravagant, but I haven't a sou with which to help anybody. Oh, Aileen, Aileen!" he exclaimed, with a sudden burst of deep feeling. "I know it was very wrong of me to tie you down to marry a poor beggar like me; but how could I help it? What else in life could I do?"

And Aileen's dark eyes upturned to his answered very plainly that she did not see what else in life he could have done.

CHAPTER II.

So Uncle Simon's invitation was accepted, and Aileen departed on a month's visit to her newly-found relative, with not a few misgivings as to the amount of pleasure she would derive from that visit.

But, gloomy as her anticipations were, they fell far short of the reality.

She arrived at her destination late in the evening, and, tired with her long journey, made her escape early to her room. Consequently it was not until the next morning that the full dreariness of the house and its surroundings stood revealed to her.

Go to which window she might, nothing but miles of scrubby moorland met her eye, bounded on one side by the white, pebbly road, which wound away for three miles, as she knew by her experience of overnight, before it reached habitation of any sort.

The weather was bleak and cold even for a Yorkshire March, and low, overhanging clouds foretelling a downfall of some sort completed the desolateness of the picture.

Within there was nothing to counterbalance the outside dreariness. The rooms were large, and but scantily furnished; the walls were innocent of pictures; the windows were but slenderly draped. Assuredly Uncle Simon, when he had commissioned his upholsterer, had not allowed a margin for either ornaments or luxuries. The long, narrow passages, which connected one room with another, were even destitute of carpets, and every footfall on them awakened a succession of echoes which seemed to answer and re-answer each other endlessly. There were not, however, many footfalls to rouse those echoes when all were told.

"You must make yourself at home, and look after yourself," Uncle Simon had said to her on her arrival, and Aileen in due course found that that meant that if she did not look after herself there was no one in the house who would do it for her—the whole establishment consisting of a deaf, elderly woman, and a lad who attended to the horse, and at odd intervals helped in the house.

Coming straight from a small London villa, into which was crowded a large family, and which was kept merry by blithe young voices from morning till night, it was only natural that Aileen should feel herself oppressed by the silence and gloom which surrounded her. "A whole month of this!" thought the girl despairingly. "Why, I shall only be fit for a lunatic asylum when I get back. Uncle Simon has been here barely three weeks, and see what it has done for him."

Although Aileen had only seen her uncle for a few minutes in her mother's drawing-room, the change in him was sufficiently marked to arrest her attention. He looked older by at least ten years; heavy-eyed and haggard; his face was sallow to cadaverousness, and his features were sharp and pinched as features could well be. He grumbled incessantly at everything from morning till night; at the deaf old woman even, whom he had brought from London because her cooking had suited him, and whose dinners and luncheons, now were an unfailing source of discontent; at the house also, which at first had seemed to him such an uncommonly good bargain.

"I shall get rid of it for just what it will fetch," he said to Aileen; "but at present I have had only one offer for it—from a man who wants it just for building material."

Aileen's exclamations of surprise called

forth a string of complaints against the house. It wasn't only that it was ill-arranged and draughty, but it was noisy.

"Noisy!" cried Aileen. "To me it seems silent as the grave itself. Except the wind and the echoes, there isn't a sound in it from morning till night."

"And isn't that enough?" cried her uncle, snappishly. "The wind has never ceased since I've been here. It has got into my head, I suppose; I've a horrible singing in my ears which almost deafens me and prevents my sleeping at night."

Aileen ventured to suggest that it might be as well to consult a doctor.

"Doctor!" he exclaimed. "Do you suppose that I need reminding that my health requires attention? I've already sent for one. If I don't look after number one, I should like to know who would."

Then he fell to grumbling at the doctor—a man called Fleetwood—who lived at a village about ten miles distant.

But he did more than grumble at Aileen; he poured out all the vials of his wrath upon her head a day or two afterwards, when a letter, addressed in a masculine hand, was brought to her in his presence.

Part of Aileen's daily duty, and the part she dreaded most, was the two hours she was called upon to spend in her uncle's study every morning. When the girl had first arrived at the house she had said to herself:

"No piano, no nice books, no lovely long rambles out of doors this bleak weather; whatever shall I find to do from morning till night?"

She very soon found that Uncle Simon knew how to fill up her time from morning till night, without the aid of piano, or books, or lovely long walks. "I suppose you know how to use your needle," he had said to her. That was a prelude to throwing the making of a stock of household linen on her hands.

"I suppose you can keep accounts," was his next query, and then the household books were committed to her care. And last in order came, "I suppose you can use your pen!" and then for two hours daily she was shut in his study with him, writing at his dictation the driest of dry business letters.

She was thus occupied when a letter from her lover was brought to her—the first she had received in her uncle's presence. The big, masculine hand, so unlike Mrs. Geldart's nervous penmanship, caught his eye.

"Who's that from?" he demanded, curtly.

"From Tom," answered Aileen, defiant in manner but nervous at heart, for she felt what was hanging over her head.

Then the storm had burst. "Confounded young curate," was the mildest of the phrases by which Tom was designated. The engagement, "the arrant piece of folly," was to be put an end to immediately, and if Aileen was found writing to or receiving letters from the young man, she was to be "packed off home at once."

"Packed off home at once!" The words had a delightful sound in them, Aileen thought, as she made her escape with her letter to her own room. "It's horrible! intolerable! I'll write to Tom at once, and tell him to come and fetch me home; it's altogether past enduring!" she exclaimed, there and then fetching her portfolio and inkstand. But second thoughts, bringing with them the recollection of her mother's farewell words, checked the defiant mood.

"Aileen," Mrs. Geldart had said, as she had kissed and put her daughter into the train, "I implore you do your utmost to make a favourable impression on your uncle. Think not only of your own wishes and likings, but of your brothers—your sisters—me. He can do so much for us all if he chooses."

Aileen paused with her pen in her hand.

"No, I must try and put up with it; it can't be for long," she mused. "When I get home, I'll make mother write to him and tell him how good and true Tom is, and that it would be utterly, utterly impossible for us to give each other up. Yes, and I'll send mother a line now, and ask her to make Tom understand that he had better not write to me while I'm here."

If Aileen had known the task her mother had set herself to perform during her absence, she would scarcely have relied so implicitly upon her good offices. Tom, like the good-hearted young fellow that he was, had gone round to Aileen's home as usual, saying to himself that the whole family must sadly want cheering up now that the sunshine had gone out of the house. The pleasant round game, however, which he intended to set going, had to be put on one side for a quiet talk, to which Mrs. Geldart invited him in a room apart, a talk in which the lady had set before

him in plain language the unpromising state of his own prospects, and what a dismal future it would be for Aileen if she were engaged to him, say for the next ten years, and then married to him on an income something under three hundred a year.

Tom had gone back to his lodgings that night with a heart as heavy as lead.

CHAPTER III.

A FORTNIGHT of Aileen's visit slowly wore itself away, each one of the lagging days, as it passed, seeming drearier than the last. No doubt she had been very heroic in forbidding, at what seemed the voice of duty, Tom to write to her; but none the less, she felt that a glimpse of the well-known writing, if only on the back of an envelope, would have done not a little to speed the weary hours.

During that fortnight, an unbroken continuance of bleak, rough weather kept her a prisoner to the house, and made her entirely dependent upon Uncle Simon alike for society and employment.

With her attention thus riveted upon him, she could not fail to note a curious, undefinable change that seemed to be passing over him. It was not only that he seemed to be growing older-looking, thinner, more cadaverous with every day that passed, but his habits, his manner even seemed to be strangely altering. He would come downstairs in the morning looking like a man who had slept badly, would eat next to nothing for breakfast, and then, instead of setting to work upon his letters, as he had done when first she had arrived, he would settle himself into his easy-chair and fall into a little doze, from which he would awaken with a sudden start and an exclamation. He grumbled less and less each day, she fancied, and his voice was, if not soft and pleasing, at least a little less acrimonious. He was constantly putting his hand to his ears as if the noises in them troubled him, and once or twice, coming suddenly into the room, she found him standing still, in a listening attitude, as if he had heard something, but was not quite sure what.

She began to grow alarmed. A slight circumstance occurring about this time brought her fears to a head. She was seated one morning with him in his study, arranging his papers as usual, while he reclined in his easy-chair with eyes closed, when suddenly he started, and turning to her, exclaimed:

"What are you sighing for? Wanting to be home again, eh?"

Aileen was astonished.

"I did not open my lips," she answered.

He stared at her blankly.

"It must have been the wind," cried Aileen, sorely puzzled. "Listen how it's moaning in the chimney now."

Her uncle made no reply, but turned away, putting his hand to his ear as if the sound were still there.

Aileen was in some things wise and thoughtful beyond her years. It occurred to her that it might be as well if she were to waylay Dr. Fleetwood on one of his visits to the house, and give him a hint on matters which perhaps Uncle Simon had not thought it necessary to mention. She had heard of all sorts of dangerous illnesses beginning with noises in the ear; it might be as well to be on the alert.

Dr. Fleetwood had made an impression upon her the very reverse of that which he had made upon her uncle. In appearance he was tall and slight, and scarcely looked his age; he had a kind smile and a dreamy, far-away look about the eyes, as of a man who felt his feet to be on the edge of another world. His manner, though grave, invited confidence.

It was easy for her to tell him all the strange symptoms she had noted in Uncle Simon.

He listened patiently.

"I'll bear in mind what you've told me, and will come again to-morrow," was all he said. But, as he said good-bye to her, for a moment he eyed her keenly, curiously, as if puzzling over the bond there could be between this bright young girl and the sordid money-maker, whom he recollected as a most uninteresting lad in the years gone by.

Aileen herself, however, if she had been cross-questioned, could easily have explained the fact.

"If he were in good health, and I were free to do as I liked, I should love to tease and worry him almost out of his life," she would have said, honestly; "but because he is getting ill, and looks wretched and unhappy, I can't help pitying him and doing my best for him."

More than ever did she feel inclined to pity him that night, when she went into his study and for a moment stood, unnoticed, watching him as he lay back in his chair with eyes closed and hand pressed tightly over one ear, as if to dull the sound of something that pained him.

That study was the most comfortable room in the house, for Uncle Simon, in accordance with his usual practice of "looking after number one," had had it specially fitted to suit his convenience. There were all sorts of big, comfortable screens, and sand-bags and wedges to the windows to keep out draughts. It was, however, so much waste labour on that night at any rate. The candles flickered, the smoke came down the chimney in puffs, even the carpet swelled up and down with the gusts that contrived somehow to find their way in through the flooring.

As the night wore on, it blew little short of a hurricane. Aileen was glad to tumble into bed as fast as possible, cover up her ears with the coverlet, and try to conjure herself to sleep with happy thoughts of the dear ones at home. It was all in vain, however; not till nearly daybreak when the wind began to lull, did she fall into a troubled, restless sleep—a sleep, however, from which she soon awakened with a great start. Sitting upright in bed, she asked herself what had aroused her.

The wind had settled into a moan now that seemed to be as much in as outside the house. Aileen, as she listened, could have fancied that the noise of the wind—its voice, so to speak, not itself—had got into the room and was sweeping past her ear. A grey, chill dawn was creeping in at the windows. She felt it was impossible to get to sleep again; she felt impelled to get up, put on her dressing-gown, and see if Uncle Simon had called her. It was just possible, she thought, that he might not feel so well and was wanting her.

Half-way to his room, however, she met Uncle Simon himself, with a white, scared look on his face.

"Was it you, Aileen?" he asked, hurriedly, nervously, in a voice not like his own.

Aileen began to explain how she had started in her sleep, and thought he might have called her.

He scarcely seemed to hear her. He looked all round him in an odd, puzzled fashion.

"I could have vowed—yes, I am positive," he said, "some one gave a loud 'ha, ha,' at my bedroom door. Did you not hear it?"

Aileen could only repeat her experience of the night.

"It was the wind—it must have been the wind—it could have been nothing else but that which woke us both," she said over

and over again, gathering courage from her own assertions.

An anxious, troubled day for Aileen followed. Her fears for Uncle Simon's health were merging now into one great fear—for his reason. His manner assuredly was not reassuring. He was strangely quiet and abstracted all that day; he did not sit down to any meal with her, but remained in his study in his easy-chair, reclining with one hand covering his ear.

Only once could Aileen get him to take the slightest interest in what was going on around him. That was when she read aloud to him a letter which the morning's post had brought. It was from the builder with whom Uncle Simon had already opened negotiations, making a final offer for the house which he intended to pull down and use for building materials.

Then Uncle Simon grew excited. He jumped to his feet.

"Send a telegram to him, saying I accept his terms. Send at once; do you hear?" he cried. He gave Aileen no rest till the thing was done, and then he relapsed into his former lassitude.

It seemed to Aileen as if Dr. Fleetwood would never come that day. It was not until the afternoon was fading into twilight that her eager ears caught the sound of wheels coming along the pebbly road. She ran to the front door to meet him, and then started back, and stood still in simple, blank astonishment. She scarcely dared to credit her eyesight, for there, seated beside him in his high phaeton, was one whom she as little expected to see as she did a visitant from another world—Tom Trevor.

The doctor was the first to alight. He hastened to explain.

"I overtook this gentleman midway between here and the station, found he was coming to your house, and offered to give him a lift. Mr. Geldart is in his study? Thank you. Don't trouble; I'll find my way there."

Tom's sudden appearance had set Aileen's heart beating. He looked white, forlorn; not like a man tired with a long journey, but like one sick at heart.

"Tell me quickly," she cried, as the doctor disappeared; "is mother ill? Is anything wrong at home?"

"Wrong!" answered the young man, bitterly. "Everything is wrong everywhere. Look here, Aileen, I may as well tell you as quickly as possible, and be done with it. Your mother has been talking to me about our engagement, and how wicked

it would be for me to keep you tied to me for years, when you might do so much better for yourself now that your rich uncle has come upon the scene. And—and—well, I lay awake last night thinking over it all, and it came into my head how that Lent is coming on, and I'm always preaching to the people about the duty of giving up our own selfish wills and likings for the good of others; and so—and so——" Here he broke off for a moment, and then brought his words out in a rush, as if afraid he might never speak them: "I've come, Aileen, to set you free!"

His last words rang out almost defiantly. They reached the ears of Uncle Simon as he sat tête-à-tête with his doctor.

"Whose voice is that?" he asked, and then, as if distrustful of his own powers of hearing, he prevented the doctor's reply by a string of hasty, nervous questions about himself and his health. What was the matter with him? Was he very ill? Was he going to die?

The doctor did not for a moment reply.

"A poor creature, this," he thought to himself. "Just what one might have expected the Simon Galdart of twenty years back to grow into."

Aloud he said:

"You are in a peculiar, not a dangerous condition of health. I've already told you you can do far more for yourself than I can do for you. Drugs are no good to you; you must alter your manner of life."

"It's those confounded noises in my ear that are at the bottom of it all; they torment me all day, and prevent my sleeping at night."

"You look overdone for want of sleep; you'll most likely drop off so soon as I am out of the room. Those noises you complain of are one of the surest symptoms of an overworked brain. You've been too ardent in your pursuit of wealth; you must rest now, and take care of your health."

"Ah, I see," murmured Uncle Simon. "Take care of myself—look after number one; that's what you mean."

A curious expression passed over the doctor's face.

"Look after number one," he repeated, slowly. "Strange to say, the last time I heard that expression, to notice it, was in this very room, from the lips of the man who last tenanted this house."

Uncle Simon started.

"Tell me all you know about that

man!" he exclaimed, eagerly. "I've a special reason for wishing to learn something about him."

"There's not much to tell. He was a surly, ill-conditioned creature; wealthy, but didn't want to be bothered by his relatives, so he cut himself adrift, took a house out here on the moors, and looked after number one."

Uncle Simon shifted a little uneasily in his chair.

"I used to call and see him occasionally, and try to make him take an interest in other people's joys and sorrows. Not a bit of it! All he cared for was himself and his own comforts."

Again Uncle Simon made an uneasy movement.

The doctor went on:

"It was all very well so long as he was in health; but when he fell ill, and not a soul, friend or relative, came near him, the tables were turned on him. I saw him the night before he was found dead in his bed, and I shall never forget his look as he turned and said to me: 'It's poor number one now, doctor!' Ab, that was in rather a different voice to the one in which he used to say: 'Mine's a jolly life, doctor! Not a soul to bother me! Ha, ha!'"

Uncle Simon gave a great start.

"He said that—in that voice—with that laugh!" he exclaimed. "Fleetwood, believe it or not, as you please, but I've heard him. That man may be dead and buried, but he has left his laugh—his voice—behind him; I heard it outside my bedroom door last night."

The doctor did not seem in the least disconcerted.

"What of that?" he said, quietly.

"Our voices are just the one part of ourselves that we can't take out of the world with us. Our bodies go into the ground, our souls go—ah, well!—to their own place, but our voices we leave behind us. The air, that has been flawed, notched, impressed by them, holds them as surely as any phonograph holds a human voice."

Uncle Simon stared at him with a look that said: "You are getting out of my depth now." Then his eyes drooped wearily.

The doctor went on: "So that, as one of our leading mathematicians has well said, 'The air is one vast library on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said and woman ever whispered.' Only one here and there has his ears finely tuned enough to catch these voices. Nine out of

every ten will say that they hear the wind rushing by, or that they have noises in their ears which plague them; but all the same, the voices are there, and—" here the doctor's voice fell to a low, solemn tone, "when the last great assize is called, and the earth gives up its dead, then will the air give up its voices, and every man will rise or fall by his own words; yes, will literally be judged out of his own mouth."

"Ha, ha!"

Uncle Simon rubbed his eyes and started nearly out of his chair. Was that the doctor's voice giving that loud, discordant laugh, or was it that other voice which he knew only too well? He rubbed his eyes again. The room was dark now, save for a flickering tongue of flame which leapt from the hollow fire and showed that the doctor's chair was empty. He had evidently departed when Uncle Simon's eyelids had drooped for want of sleep. He passed his hand over his forehead and sat staring at the vacant chair. Could it be that all the doctor had been saying was true, and would that poor miserable creature's laugh of selfish jollity go ringing on to eternity?

The thought was horrible. He felt oppressed. He could fancy that the air around him was laden with human voices. The noises in his ear began ringing and swelling to a perfect tumult now, a tumult of loud "ha, ha's," of deep-drawn sighs, of a voice strangely like his own, saying, "Take care of number one!" of a long drawn-out, pitiful wail that went moaning, "Poor number one, poor number one!"

Over all this tumult of sound there suddenly came to him a voice he knew well enough—a strained, tear-laden voice—that of Aileen, saying, "Good-bye, Tom, since it must be. Oh, why did he come all the way from Chicago just to break our hearts?"

Uncle Simon could bear it no longer. He rose tumultuously to his feet, and threw open his door.

"Stop!" he cried, in a loud though husky voice. "Don't say that. For Heaven's sake don't let that go on record against me too!"

Tom and Aileen turned to see Uncle Simon, with a look on his face which had never been there before, reaching a hand to each.

"Be happy," he said. "Yes, be happy as soon as ever you like. Marry each other to-morrow if you like, and I'll find you a house and an income, and look after your

mother and your brothers and your sisters—the whole ten of them—and do my best to make every one of you happy." And he was as good as his word.

"A WHISPER."

By ESMÉ STUART.

Author of "Kestel of Graystone," etc. etc.

SPRING had suddenly stepped upon the earth with dainty feet, and she walked about whispering in the ears of lovers, thus causing them to dream beautiful dreams of their loved ones. Usually she varies these whispered tales, and makes each vision applicable; but on one particular occasion she made a mistake, and the result of her duplicate story was that she called up exactly the same vision to Pen Thornhill and Stephen Atwater, and that vision was the sweet, laughing, provoking, fascinating picture of Pensie Willemet. When these two men awoke, they made the same resolution, which was that they would go and ask Pensie on that very day if she would listen to reason, and if this listening could bring forth the answer "yes" to a certain question.

Stephen Atwater had lately lost his father, so he was now the young Squire and owner of the old Moat House, which without was grey, and picturesque, and ivy-covered, but within dull and silent; in fact, it was waiting for a young mistress. Stephen could find no reason why Pensie should say "no," but unfortunately who could be sure of her answers? She was a flirt, there was no doubt about it—a flirt who made the men her devoted slaves, and led them on because of that innate charm about her, and because of those sweet, gracious words which were so enchanting, till—well, till you heard them bestowed upon the next worshipper at the Pensie shrine. Then your soul recoiled, and you wanted Pensie to be what she could not be—cold, haughty, and severe.

Stephen Atwater thought of the Moat House, of his rent-roll, of his good looks, and lastly of his passionate wish to possess Pensie, and he determined to try his luck. There was but one man whom he really feared, and this was Pen Thornhill, who now lived in the same house with Pensie. The neighbourhood generally said that

Miss Penelope Willemet would certainly marry Captain Thornhill, who was her guardian's nephew and his heir.

Pensie lived at Hurstmere, a modern mansion two miles away from the Moat House—two miles of country lanes now clothed in the exquisite tender green which poets love so much, and which, in spite of themselves, makes them sing plaintive songs. Mr. Thornhill was a rich engineer, who had made money by laying railways for South American Republics, and who having lost one fortune and made a second, had determined to retire on his riches and not tempt fate a second time. He therefore left the Republics, and brought away his money and the orphan child of a friend, a young engineer, who had married a South American girl, and who soon after had been killed on the line he was helping to construct. His widow lived long enough to see her baby girl, and to hear Mr. Thornhill's promise that she should be as his own child. He had nobly fulfilled that promise. He was too just to make her his heir—that privilege belonged by right to his nephew Pen—but he settled a yearly income upon her of five hundred pounds, and gave her the remainder in love.

She was the joy of his life—she and Pen, who till now had seldom been at home, however. He had entered the army, and had been sent to India and to the Gold Coast. He had helped in a little war here and a smaller war there, and lastly he had become a captain much sooner than he had expected, which is saying a good deal, for officers' expectations are boundless. But then Mr. Thornhill fell ill, and became a permanent invalid, so he asked Pen if he would very much mind leaving the army and settling down at Hurstmere to look after the property. Pen obeyed at once without saying whether or no he did mind, and came home to Hurstmere to be the prop of the house. After this it was the Captain here, and the Captain there, and, of course, Pensie at once took possession of him, and he also at once fell in love with her; at least, he had done that some time before, for to be many weeks with Pensie was fatal. Envy and jealousy had to own she was lovely, but they added, to sweeten the confession, that she had no heart and that she could not be trusted.

It was a beautiful May day when Stephen Atwater took the short cut through the copse and the meadows,

determined to try his luck. His cousins, the Kempes, who lived not far from Hurstmere, saw him go by, and Phoebe, who, people said, meant to marry the Squire, felt sure that Stevie was going after "that girl," and her heart sank down very low; but she thought, "Perhaps she won't have him; most likely she means to marry the Captain, who will be richer than Stevie, and is, as every one can see, in spite of his quiet ways, madly in love with her."

Stephen found Pensie in the garden, where she was picking flowers and going from blossom to blossom like a beautiful humming-bird, now and then singing to herself a quaint song taught her by her old nurse. She was so young, so happy, all the world was bright for her; and as for love, she had so much of it, it seemed difficult to choose, or to know her own mind as to which special lover she preferred—Stevie's quick, passionate, importunate, arrogant love, or Pen's silent, deep, almost authoritative worship, which sometimes made her feel like a naughty child. At such moments she rebelled and said she wished to be a woman; but then, again, at other times she felt inclined to lay her head on Pen's shoulder, and to tell him that he could make her good if he tried, and—that he had better try!

But now here was Stephen himself, and her basket dropped from her fingers, and before she could fly away the Squire's hands had seized both hers, and he was pouring out a torrent of passionate love. Pensie was frightened; she had never seen or heard anything like this before—an outpouring of words which might be compared with the sudden breaking forth of molten lava or liberated waters from a reservoir, sights which are at once both beautiful and terrible, but from which you instinctively turn away.

"Oh, Mr. Atwater, don't!" she said, turning her head away, though her hands were fast held.

"But, Pensie, my darling, I must speak. You don't know what you are making me suffer; you don't know how I've resisted this love, but it is useless. I love you madly when you smile on me, and I almost curse you when you seem indifferent; and now—now I must have an answer; I must, or——"

"Oh, hush! hush! you don't mean all this. I can't give you an answer now; I must think. I—I don't know my own mind. I'm so young—I—please, please go

away, and perhaps some day—in a day or two——"

"No; now, Pensie; now, my darling. What can I say to persuade you? I love you so much. I've loved you till I've—good Heavens! Pensie, till I've nearly cried with the pain like a child."

"Not now—not now," repeated Pensie, beginning to cry. "I must speak to uncle, and oh! I don't know my own mind. Come back in two days, and—oh, do go, I hear somebody coming."

Stephen felt bound to obey that pleading voice, though at the same time he would have liked to have taken her up in his arms and run away with her—far away from his only possible rival, Captain Thornhill. Phœbe Kempe, who saw him pass back, read some of his thoughts, for he forgot his accustomed nod towards the windows of The Laurels; but Phœbe forgot none of her envy and malice, in thinking of "that girl."

Left alone, Pensie sat down in the summer-house and cried; then she dried her tears and laughed, and then she thought she would take a walk. It so happened that the Captain had been out all the afternoon, and he, too, had made up his mind to try his luck that day. On reaching the gate which led out of the grounds, he met Pensie. She looked a little pale, a little subdued, and entirely fascinating in her unusual gentleness.

"Oh, Pen! how strange that I should meet you!" she said, as he turned back with her, and walked by her side in silence for a few minutes. Then he seized his courage in his two hands and spoke gently.

"Pensie, I want to say something to you; I think you must know it already. You are so young, so beautiful, and I know many men admire you, and perhaps love you; but I wonder if any love you as much as I do? Oh, my darling, I am afraid of letting you see all that is in my heart, because—I want you to be happy in your own way. I don't want you to imagine that you are not free to choose the man you love best. Uncle will think the same, I know; but, Pensie, I love you with all my heart, and soul, and with all my life—yes, all my life. Tell me if I must keep silence, or if I may speak."

Poor Pensie, it was really a trying day for her, for she was experiencing that you can have too much love, and that it is safer never to flirt with more than one lover at a time. Pensie recognised, now that it was too late, that she was a flirt,

and that the result was that she did not know her own mind.

"Oh, Pen, don't, don't say any more. I don't know. It has all come on the same day."

"The discovery of my love, darling!"

"No; but—never mind. Give me two days, Pen; yes, you must, and then I'll try and think it out, and—I do hope I shall be able to say yes—or no, then." She slipped her hand into his arm and added, cheerfully: "Now be the dear, good, obedient Pen of old times, and let's take a walk and not talk of anything but nice things."

So the Captain did as he was bid, and the two sauntered on as they had often done before, and Pensie tried to put away the idea that she had better make up her mind at once, and be honest at least with one of her two lovers. Pen was Pen, good, kind, thoughtful; but she knew him so well, there was nothing new to discover in him, no unexplored land; whilst Stevie had a nature she could not quite understand; he took possession of her, he adored her, he was masterful, vain, perhaps, but—she was the least little bit afraid of him. Pensie really could not, she said to herself, know which of the two she should choose; but in two days she must decide, of course she must.

Phœbe Kempe saw these two go out and come in again; saw how Pensie had her hand on the Captain's arm, and heard her laugh—a laugh which was so sweet, so rich, so joyous.

"The horrid little flirt!" she said, and she determined to save Stevie from his fate, even if it cost him some pain, and her some little twisting of facts.

Two days went by, and during that time Pensie put away all thought, and eased her conscience by being specially loving and attentive to her guardian; and he, guessing that Pen was trying his luck, found means to say a few things in his nephew's favour. This made Pensie still more miserable and still more uncertain. On the third day the Captain waited till he saw Pensie in the garden, hovering among the flowers she loved so much, and then, hastening towards her, he stood by her in silence for a few moments, and then he said, in a low voice:

"My darling, now I must know—I must know; don't keep me any longer in suspense."

"Oh, Pen! oh, Pen!" she said, and broke down, so he drew her gently to him,

and for a minute her head rested on his breast, and he softly murmured :

"My own, my darling, don't cry."

Unfortunately Stephen had also hastened to the garden to hear his sentence. He had put away from him Phœbe's insinuations as unworthy of his Pensie; but the poison of his cousin's words had been working silently. He came unheard upon the soft grass; he fancied he saw her blue dress through the shrubs, like a bit of sky that had fluttered to earth, and he made straight for it, just in time to see his darling's head upon another man's breast, and that man his only possible rival, Pen Thornhill. Phœbe was right; Pensie was a flirt, something worse, a heartless woman, a traitor, a—— He rushed away unheard, unseen, and plunging into a shrubbery, made his exit out of the grounds by jumping over a fence. In the distance he saw Phœbe coming towards him, and fled in the opposite direction; he hated her because she had spoken truly, and he hated himself for loving a worthless woman for nothing, and, above all, he hated life.

The beautiful spring sunshine seemed to mock him and his sorrow as he hastened back to the Moat House; every step he took made him more mad with disappointed love; he cursed his fate and his love alternately, having none of Pen's finer element of courage in his nature. When he reached his own door he fancied that everything about it had changed; that the grey walls looked like the home of despair; that the dark rooms were tenanted by evil spirits, who whispered horrible suggestions to him—whispered mockingly that his life was not worth having since a woman had cheated him, betrayed him, and led him on merely to give him pain. Perhaps she had even prepared his punishment beforehand; perhaps she had guessed that he would come and see her with another man's arms round her, another man's lips on hers. Why had woman been created; why had love been implanted into the heart of man? Was it merely that it might kill him?

Stephen paced the library floor up and down, up and down. Life was of no value to him if it might not be lived as he liked, and if all that could make it beautiful was turned to bitter disappointment. Death was infinitely preferable—infinitely. He paused at that idea, and a mocking voice seemed to whisper: "Why not have done with it altogether?" Why? He walked slowly upstairs into his bedroom, and going

to a drawer he pulled out a revolver, loaded it, and placed it on a table before him, and remained thus—he never knew how long. Madness is the want of the proportion of the ideas; it is the overmastering passion of a thought; often it is the passion of selfishness; and Stephen Atwater sat in the same place all that spring afternoon, brooding over his wrongs till this kind of madness seized him.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. He started up, hid the revolver with a newspaper, and then went to the door. It was James, the footman.

"Miss Kempe and Miss Phœbe Kempe have called, sir, and beg to say that they would like to see you for a few minutes."

Stephen stared at the servant as if he could not understand his words; then, with a great effort, he answered:

"Very well, James; show the ladies into the drawing-room."

Strange to say, after a few minutes the young Squire was able to follow James, and though he looked pale and grave, his cousins did not guess the state of mind he was in. The effort was tremendous, but Stephen was not going to let the world know of his wound till all was over.

"Oh, Stevie," said Miss Kempe, "mother wants to know if you will dine with us to-night—only ourselves."

"You must be so dull," added Phœbe; "we wanted to ask Pensie, but she is better engaged, I fancy, from something I saw."

"Indeed! I suppose you mean——"

Stephen could not finish the sentence, but Phœbe was glad to do it for him.

"Yes, indeed, there is no doubt that she and the Captain will make a match of it. I do think she is a flirt of the first water. She has been given to at least three men since last winter. There was Mr. Lloyd, who was madly in love with her."

"But, Phœbe, dear, Pensie can't help if people will admire her."

"Oh, can't she? She makes eyes at all the men. Well, I am sure Mr. Lloyd had a happy escape. I pity the man who marries Pensie."

She looked at Stephen as she said this.

"He won't be the first man who finds a wife a poor bargain," said Stephen, laughing.

"No, but with her the Captain will have no chance of being happy. How happy a nice wife can make a man! Don't

you know, Helen, how happy Fanny and George Smythe are—such a perfect understanding; but then they were sort of cousins, and had known each other always."

"But you will come this evening, won't you, Stevie?" said Helen.

"I am afraid I can't," answered Stephen, slowly, as if each word hurt him; "I have an engagement. I must go—there is a meeting at Coulton which I must attend; another evening I will come."

"Never mind the meeting, dear Stevie," said Phoebe, softly; "do you know that you really do look ill, and to be with us, who so truly appreciate you, will do you a world of good? I am sure it will."

Stephen began to feel furious; he felt that he could almost turn Phoebe out of the house for daring to offer him sympathy; but he also felt that perhaps if he went to dine with the Kempes that evening he might propose to this girl—and repent afterwards.

"No," he said, "I can't come; and if you will excuse me, I must go now, I have some writing to finish."

He got rid of them somehow, then rushed back to his room and to that black thought. It seemed to grow bigger and bigger, till the whole room was filled with its phantom form. Stephen at last rang the bell, and told James that he did not wish to dine that evening, he was not feeling well; but he was to bring him some whisky and biscuits, and that he would go to bed early.

The spring day drew to its close with a soft sigh in the air like that of a weary, tired child; the gentle song of the birds gradually hushed itself; a slight mist rose over the meadows, and clung about the base of the beech-trees near to the Moat House; the moonlight pierced the half-clothed branches, and sent strange shadows to chill the daisies on the grass; but no peace came to the brain of the man whom the spirit of the coward had filled. He had made so sure of Pensie; he loved her so passionately, and he was not to have her.

Then he sat down and began to write a letter to her—a letter dictated by the mad passion which possessed him, but which also now and then showed signs of true love. This letter should make Pensie know what she had done; she should not remain ignorant of the fact that it was her fault, and that his death would be associated for ever with her sin.

He wrote many pages; then he re-read

them, and they seemed but poor attempts at the truth; they did not properly express his thoughts, so he tore up the sheets and began again.

In the midst of the second epistle he paused. There came to him the remembrance of his early life, of his mother, dead long ago. He put down his pen, and some good angel whispered better thoughts to him. But no, Pensie should read that letter; so he sat down again to his painful task, and as he wrote, the black phantom rose again, and again hovered over him, filling every space, urging him on to a mad deed, and offering him peace after it was over—peace and forgetfulness.

Forgetfulness!—but what if there should be none? What if the grave only sharpened memory? The idea made him recoil. He once more rose up and went to the window.

"Pensie, Pensie," he called out, as if she could hear him. "Come to me, my darling. I will forgive you. But no; that man has your love—that man; most likely you are dreaming of him, and he of you. Curse him!"

He flung open the window, and let the cool night air play upon his forehead; then he went to the table, poured out some whisky, and drank it. That did a man good; it braced his nerves; it made him feel a new fire coursing in his veins.

The clock struck twelve.

If the time was come to end his misery, he felt that now he had the courage to accomplish the deed. He began making a few preparations. He fastened the letter, and directed it. He tried to fancy Pensie opening it and reading it. Ah! then she would be sorry! She might repent. Too late! And the words "too late," sent him back into a world of dreams, during which Time disappeared. At last he rose, and once more returned to the window and looked out. The moonlight was so bright, that he could see things quite distinctly a long way off. And as he stood and gazed, it seemed to him that he saw the form of a man in a meadow.

Was it a gamekeeper? No; he knew the outward look of all the men on his estate. This figure had the build of a gentleman. He watched it intently for some time, then a strange feeling of fury seized him. He fancied—but no—was his mind losing its balance!—the figure was running, running as if for life. But suddenly it reached the copse, and disappeared in its shadows.

Stephen stood in the same place spell-bound. He believed he had seen a vision of his enemy—a vision meant to urge him on to the final tragedy. He had seen, or fancied he had seen, his rival.

At last, after a long interval, he turned round suddenly, and seized the revolver just as there sounded through the house the loud, harsh sound of the front-door bell.

Pensie all that day had waited for him, restless, uncertain. She had not really said "Yes" to Pen, she had begged him for a little more time; she loved him, but was it as a brother or as a lover? She was not sure. Pen was too happy to complain; he had felt that she was his; that she must be his because he loved her so truly, so unselfishly, so much more than he loved himself. Pensie bound him down "to say nothing yet to uncle," and Pen rather enjoyed hugging his secret, at least for a day, and Pensie that evening was quite charming, quiet, and pensive, and this mood added seven-fold to her charms.

So Pen fell asleep that night in the happiest frame of mind, a state of bliss which comes but once in a man's lifetime but which he remembers in old age.

Suddenly, however, he seemed to be roused out of his pleasant slumber by a voice close to him—a voice whose words were whispered, and yet which seemed so intensely audible that he started up and hastily struck a match.

The words were, "Go to the Moat House."

He looked round and saw that he was alone. He thought he must have been dreaming—so he laid down again, strangely troubled by the recollection of the intensity of that whisper. Of course it was only a dream, and in ten minutes Pen was dozing again, but again with startling distinctness he heard the words, "Go to the Moat House."

The Captain was not superstitious—he had knocked about the world too much for that—but he could not resist again striking a match and again looking round to see if he were really alone. All was as usual. Hurstmere was a new house, and had no strange corners and no traditional ghost. What could it mean? The words seemed to vibrate through him in a strange and awful manner. He positively dared not lie down again for fear of again hearing that imperative command, so he dressed hastily, determined to see if there were some one outside. This he said to excuse

himself for thus putting on his clothes at midnight. He looked at his watch, it was half-past twelve; he must have been in his first and soundest sleep when that whisper had roused him.

He went to the window, and gazing out saw nothing but the moonlight embracing the earth with her cold arms. He turned away, feeling still more the horror of that whisper. What a fool he would look if it all meant nothing! Then he softly opened the door and walked down the passage, past his uncle's room, past Miss Hilton's door, and then just as he came opposite Pensie's chamber, he was startled by seeing the door quickly open, and still more startled by beholding Pensie herself fully dressed and pale as the pale moonlight, standing in the doorway.

"Oh, Pen," she said, but not in the tone she had used this morning, her voice seemed like a muffled note of funeral music.

"What is the matter?" he said, quickly. "I—I thought you—something was the matter."

"Oh, Pen, I am glad you have come. I've just had a dreadful dream—oh, so dreadful! Go to the Moat House."

Pen started back on hearing the words again.

"What do you mean? Was it you—you, Pensie, who said that?"

"Said what? But never mind, you are dressed. Oh, go—go to Mr. Atwater and tell him——"

"Mr. Atwater, Pensie!" Pen's heart sank within him.

"Oh, Pen, I'm so wicked; it is my fault. He said he would come yesterday, and I should give him his answer. Don't look so, Pen; Stevie loves me, too. I couldn't help it; I—I—I dreamt. Oh, Pen, make haste; go and tell him that—that—anything; but don't let that happen; don't let me have his blood on my head. If you won't go, Pen, I must—I must."

Captain Thornhill had done many brave things in his life, but I think this was the bravest deed he had ever been asked to volunteer for.

"Pensie, of course you cannot go there. I shall go; tell me what to say."

Pensie's beautiful, horror-struck face looked at him beseechingly; and she was silent. At this moment, poor child, she knew she loved Pen best—yes, she loved him best; but, oh, the horror of that dream. If it were true it was her fault, hers—hers. For one moment she flung

her arms round Pen and hid her face on his shoulder.

"Pen, I've been vain, and wicked; but I didn't know—I didn't mean it. Save me, Pen, from that dream, if it is true. Say 'yes,' 'yes.' Oh, Pen! oh, Pen!—but go, go to the Moat House."

The Captain had faced the Zulus' assegais and the spears of the wild Arabs—such things were nothing to this; but courage lives at home as well as in the battlefield, and, without another word, Pen Thornhill rushed away. Should he saddle a horse, or walk? It was two miles by the road, but by taking a short cut through fields and across a copse, he could shorten it by nearly half. It was quicker to walk there than to go to the stables and wake the groom; so, like a hare pursued by dogs, the Captain began to run. He put away all personal thoughts for fear he should fail, for fear he should stop in the race—he doubted that voice no longer now. If it meant anything, and if Pensie's terrible dream was also a warning—let sceptics call it what they like—it all meant that he was running a race for life—the life of his rival—Stephen Atwater's life, but his, Pen Thornhill's death, the death of all his hopes. Was he, as it were, tolling his own knell; was he taking the poison from Stephen's lips in order to drink it himself; or was all this a terrible nightmare, an episode he should forget or laugh at afterwards? Yes, after he, Pen, had married Pensie; after she was his, his. No, he must not think; his duty was to hasten on.

So he ran, on and on, over the moonlit grass, past the familiar landmarks, across the small footbridge, and into the dark copse, with its first mantle of green and its night silence. At last the Moat House was in sight, he was separated from it by a great ditch. Reckless of hindrances, he ran down the steep sides and climbed over a high fence, then crossing the old-fashioned lawn he arrived at the front door. Looking up, he saw, though he knew it must be nearly half-past one, a light in an upper window, and without a moment's pause he seized the bell and pulled it violently. The footman slept downstairs, and hurried out of his bed to answer this which must be certainly a midnight appeal for help. Pen treated him with scant courtesy.

"Which is your master's room? I have an urgent message for him."

"Oh, sir! Oh, Captain Thornhill, what's the matter? The first on the right, at the top of the stairs. Shall I go—?"

"No; don't follow me, I want no one."

He strode upstairs, and turned the handle of the door. It was locked.

"Atwater, open the door at once; I want you. I have a message for you."

Stephen knew the voice. His hand was holding something, and his face was deathly pale, whilst a strange, wild light shone in his eyes. Without a word he opened the door; but his calmness was forced—the calmness of temporary madness.

Pen saw everything at a glance—saw the gleam of hatred in Stephen's eyes—saw the mad passion surging up—the passion of jealousy, of overmastering pain and disappointment. Saw also something else, and he made a dash at the young Squire's right hand.

"Coward! Madman, give me that. What are you doing? Thank Heaven I'm in time."

There was a fierce struggle, for already Atwater's passion had burst its bounds. He thought with devilish pleasure that his rival should witness his death, and for all answer, he deliberately turned the muzzle of his revolver towards his temples. His hand was on the trigger just as the Captain seized his arm, and jerked the weapon upwards. The Captain was stronger, taller than the Squire, and as the revolver went off, the ball lodged, not in Steve's brain, but in Pen's left shoulder. Fortunately, it went clean through, and for the first moment the pain was not overpowering. Pen could still wrench away the revolver with his right hand, and say what he had to say.

"Atwater, listen, man, if you are a man and not a fool. What have you tried to do? Think of Pensie. She sent me—she—she—told me to say—to say 'yes'—'yes.' Do you hear, man? That was her message to you—and you—good heavens! I think this is blood."

But it was Atwater who reeled, Atwater who fainted; and Pen had enough pluck and enough presence of mind to ring the bell, and to keep tight hold of the revolver.

When the men rushed in he tried to laugh.

"I've shot myself by accident. Didn't know the cursed thing was loaded, and—your master has fainted at the sight of blood—my blood, you know. Here, man, staunch it, and you, fellow, run for a doctor, and get some of the womenkind to see after the Squire. Why the deuce do people keep loaded firearms in a bedroom?"

"Master always does," gasped the footman, as he ran off, and on his way he repeated the story as he had heard it.

Men like Pen Thornhill do not die of wounds, they live to get well and to suffer; but he did not have to attend the wedding of the Squire with the beautiful Pensie. Fortune in some respects favoured him. Old Mr. Thornhill died suddenly the week after the accident, and so his nephew, who could not be moved from the Moat House for a month, never returned to his home for many a long year. He became a wanderer on the face of the earth, but a wanderer who always left his mark, and that a good mark, wherever he went. He had to carry about with him a heavy burden of sorrow, but he carried it as a soldier should, without wincing.

And Pensie! Ah, well, Phoebe Kempe rejoiced with an unholy joy because that marriage was not considered by gossips to be a very happy one; no breath of scandal ever approached the Moat House, but the Squire's marriage was not a perfect union—that was all.

"MEASURE FOR MEASURE."

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS
(MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN).

PART I. HER DAY.

THEY called him "the boy"—that is, in the regiment.

Of course, it is a very easy thing to put a number or a name to a regiment; but those of us who have ever lived in one well know that the definite article serves all necessary nomenclature. That regiment is "the" regiment. The others—Horse and Foot, Gunners and Sappers—may go by various names and—in the days of which I write—numbers; but "the" is enough for "ours."

Well, then, in "the" regiment, Mostyn Eliot was familiarly known among his comrades as "the boy."

This sobriquet assuredly did not cling to him because of his youthfulness, nor yet because of his position, for he was what his soldier-servant's wife called a "full leutenant"—a rank not to be found in the Army List, but one which appeared to be looked upon with infinite satisfaction by the good woman in question—and his years were such as might be expected in a

man who looked forward to the chance of purchasing his captaincy shortly.

No, it was neither years nor position that gave Mostyn Eliot the name of "the boy," it was an indescribable breeziness and freshness about his whole personality, a verve and go that characterised all he said and did, a capability of the thorough enjoyment of life and all its healthy pleasures; a straightforwardness so complete that it now and again laid him open to imposture.

People had been heard to say that it "did them good" to see young Eliot; and as to the men of the 193rd, they would, as the saying is, have gone through fire and water for him. He had such a kindly way with him! He would stoop down to speak to some diminutive child, sobbing outside the married quarters, and try hard to understand the baby language that slipped out the story of a trouble that cost so many tears. If a poor woman of the company to which he belonged were ill, Lieutenant Eliot was sure to remember to ask her husband how she was. Sometimes his sympathy took a more substantial form; but he had little beyond his pay to live on, and could not be as generous as he would. If some silly ensign, top-heavy with a sense of his own importance, began to get into deep waters and social quagmires, many times and oft was Eliot's hand outstretched to drag him on to dry land, set him on his feet, and keep an eye upon him until he was more—what I once heard an old soldier call—"used to himself"—that is, himself in a uniform, and without his family about him to look after him.

Then what a gift of humour Eliot possessed! You might have told his place at the mess-table with your eyes shut. There was generally a ripple of laughter playing about him, and even the Colonel—rather a gaunt and grim specimen of a C.O.—had been known to let off a sudden guffaw—like the firing of a gun, and almost as short and sudden—at some of his sayings and doings.

But with all these bright and gentle characteristics, there was another side to Mostyn Eliot's personality, which was—it must be confessed—somewhat startling to you when first you came across it. This was a sudden, severe, almost implacable austerity, which certain kinds of evil-doing brought out in him, as heat brings out colour. The bright, debonaire face would grow like marble; the lips, made

for smiles and kindly words, would set in a relentless line; the very voice of the man would change. The men knew this phase of the Lieutenant, and feared it; his brother officers—that is to say, one or two of them, had also made acquaintance with it. On more than one occasion some youngster, who had lost more money at cards than he could well pay, had found a willing banker in Mostyn Eliot; but, a sporting Captain of the regiment having tried the process called "plucking a pigeon," thought he had perhaps best not repeat the experiment, that is, he thought so after an interview with "the boy." Other youngsters, in still more compromising situations, found a friend in our hero; but a certain weak-kneed young idiot, having given the name of a brother officer to mask his own misdoings, and to escape their consequences, wished he had never been born—or born with a more manly courage, and better sense of rectitude—as Mostyn Eliot passed him by with a nod which it would have required a magnifying-glass to detect, and was apparently quite unconscious of his presence in the ante-room, or at mess, only recognising him when in his official capacity that recognition became a necessity. The sternness of a person usually genial and sympathetic is bitter, and cuts deep. In the case of Mostyn Eliot it had also all the force that ever attends the unexpected.

It will be seen by all this the kind of reputation Mostyn Eliot had in the 193rd, and the estimation in which he was held.

It so happened that the regiment had been in for a long spell of home-service, and very pleasant soldiering had Mostyn Eliot found it, though at times he longed or something more stirring, longed to "smell gunpowder," and experience the sensation of being "under fire." Soldiering in the northern capital of Ireland, with its brilliant little court, its Castle balls, its starry-eyed women and genial men; in the South with its hunting and fishing, its lovely climate, and delightful—though somewhat ramshackle—old country mansions, where the welcome ever failed you, and the smile and the jest were like sunshine ever playing—all these things, and many more akin to them, were charming; but the heart of our young soldier yearned for a more adventurous life, and for a chance of winning distinction, of showing the grit that was in him.

In some sort, it appeared likely that these wishes of his might be fulfilled, for orders

for Indian service reached the 193rd, and all was bustle, excitement, and chatter. A rookery in its busiest spring moments would hardly have compared with the mess for noise and disputation the night of the day on which this news had arrived. To the young and hopeful it was welcome indeed. The iron Colonel spoke few words and gave no indication as to the state of his mind on the subject of the move, save a curtly worded hope that his officers would not overburden themselves with baggage, and a muttered assertion that in his young days a toothbrush and a pocket-handkerchief were "about it;" but that, nowadays, the service was going to the dogs, and a man couldn't set out without a pack of patent chairs and "Heaven knows what."

To the men married without leave this news was the knell of doom, and women's tears poured forth like rain, while the little ones wondered why mother was crying, and why daddy held them so tight as they clambered on his knees and fingered the bright buttons on his tunic.

There were other sad hearts in the regiment. Ensign Grimper—a very young warrior indeed—desperately in love with a widow fourteen years older than himself, rushed off in the heat of the moment and proposed; returning crushed, not only by the lady's kind, but firm refusal, but also because she had commenced it thus: "My dear boy." She had also got very red in the face, and he had seen the tears start to her eyes; but he had hideous misgivings that these marks of agitation were the signs of repressed laughter and astonishment, rather than of any softer emotion. Ensign Grimper was not in a frame of mind to accept the "previous-to-embarkation leave" that now set in. He button-holed fellows in the ante-room all day long.

"My dear fellow," he would say, "do you think she was laughing at me?" They were sure she was; but they soothed him as best they could, and did not even smile when he said he "trusted he should find a grave in the burning East."

Mostyn Eliot was one of the first to start on six weeks' leave of absence. His mother—long widowed—was staying with her brother, General Le Gyte, at his old country house in the heart of the green Midlands. Thither our hero sped, light at heart, glad in the prospect that lay before him, pondering on the possibilities of big game in the Himalayas, tiger-shooting in the jungle, of everything around him new and strange, full of interest to the eye.

The dog-cart met Mr. Eliot at the station, and the ancient servitor who drove it apologised for the General's absence by mentioning that "it" had got him again in the left foot; "it" standing for the gout, an enemy the old soldier had found more redoubtable than any faced in battle.

The lovely spring of 1857 was breaking on the world, carpeting the woods with heaven-blue hyacinths, dotting the meadows with golden daffodils, scenting the air with the perfume of new-blown violets. The birds, not yet in full song, carolled in snatches of joyful melody: the fitful overture to the fuller choir to come. How fresh and fair the world seemed as Mostyn Eliot passed rapidly by mead and stream, by groves of larch all hung with emerald tassels, and beeches ruddy with a myriad bursting buds!

Then the village, near which lay the old Manor House, gained, there came into sight the Rectory. Such a dear old place as it was, with its red gables, and clematis-hung walls, its pathway leading to the lych-gate of the churchyard, and its ancient yew-tree on the bit of a lawn that it looked so much too big for!

Mostyn had had many a pleasant day at the Manor House, and was glad to see these landmarks again. But what was this new and charming feature in the landscape? A girl, tall and slender, with a beautiful, dark face, and dreamy eyes—a girl leaning on the Rectory gate, swinging a large black Spanish hat in her hand, and lazily regarding the passers-by!

The groom touched his hat; the girl gave a tiny nod, flashing a quick, all-taking-in look at the stranger as she did so.

"Who is the lady, Gerningham?" said Mostyn, ashamed to be conscious of an almost irresistible desire to turn round and look at her once again. "Surely she is a stranger in these parts?"

"Well, sir, it's this way—she is, and she isn't. She's niece to the Rev. Damien, and come from foreign parts to keep house for him, so they say. He's bin a very lonely old man, sir, since Master Fred took to bad ways, has the Rev. Damien; and, maybe, it's well for him to have something young and pleasant-like anigh him to cheer him up. Miss Clarice, sir, they call her. But you'll know all about her better than me afore many hours be past, for the Reverend and her be dining up at the Manor to-night, so Simpkins told me, and other quality beside."

Know all about her? Why, before mid-

night it seemed to Mostyn Eliot as if he had known her all his life, since life must have been quite an empty sort of thing, not worth the mentioning, until he did know her.

One long glance into those deep, soft eyes, one long drinking-in of the mellow tones of her low, sweet voice, and . . . the deed was done.

Some men walk into love; some saunter into love; some fall into love; Lieutenant Eliot of the 193rd plunged into love! Neither did he hide this burning light of love under a bushel. He spent every possible hour of every possible day by the side of Clarice Damien. He told her of all his hopes and ambitions for the future; of his regiment, his men, his ideas on many abstruse subjects connected with the Service—with a big S. He was not a man to treat a woman as a toy or a doll. Her beauty drew him to her, her charm conquered him; but he craved for a share of her heart and her mind; he wanted her to enter into his life as he would fain do into hers. The old Rector, busy delving among Greek roots, or straining every nerve to scrape together what money he could to send to his scapegrace son—who was always in extremity for lack of coin of the realm, and had once represented himself dying in order to extort an extra contribution—saw nothing of the drama that was being enacted under his reverend nose. Mrs. Eliot saw it clearly enough; and, holding love to be a very sacred thing indeed, did not see fit to interfere, though she knew Clarice to be penniless, and Mostyn dependent on his pay, and with little or no prospect of ever being anything else, until her own death should give him something like two hundred a year. She had loved and married his father, and they had been very happy together, though always poor enough; so happy, that when her husband died, the light died out of her life for ever, save for the boy with the father's eyes and his bonnie curly hair. The old General saw it, and frowned; he was of opinion that any man who married young made a distinct fool of himself. Had not Mostyn himself told him of a young fellow called Musters—a promising spark, a skilled surgeon and right good sort—belonging to the 193rd, who went and married a woman with a head like a bull-frog and a tongue like the clapper of a bell, and was spoken of as "poor old Musters" ever after by his brother officers?

In common with many other people he was slightly afraid of his nephew, or he would have expressed his opinions openly, and alluded to the case of Mustera. His worldly-minded wife, on the contrary, encouraged young Eliot's infatuation—pour cause. Had she not an eldest son—one Blazebrook Le Gyte, now ten years a widower, rich in his own right, as well as prospectively, as heir of the Manor House and lands? True, he did not bear a very savoury reputation up in town; but he was looked upon as a parti, and Mrs. Le Gyte had no notion of him playing King Cophetua to the beggar maiden, Clarice Damien. At one time the constant visits of this delectable being to the Rectory had alarmed her. The Rector's niece was, therefore, better out of the way. And what of the girl herself?

There are people in the world—women and men too—who are like cats; they like warmth and comfort, and purr, or go as near to that process as their human organisation will allow them, when they find themselves surrounded by luxury, wealth, and ease. To Clarice the Manor House was a sort of Paradise. Mr. Damien was poor, very poor. Not only was the living of Deepdene a poor one, but a constant drain sapped its limited resources. That terrible "Master Fred," of whom we have heard Gerningham speak, was a sort of quicksand that swallowed up everything. The simple, nay, often pinched fare, the constant efforts after economy in little things—how the girl hated it all! Yet she was not wholly ungrateful, nor yet wholly unloving; only she pitied herself, and was never so happy as when, with her natty little shoes in a neat parcel, and her best gown covered with a long water-proof cloak, she betook herself to the Manor to see "dear Mrs. Le Gyte." It is more than probable the girl would herself have been shocked if she could have realised how much the dainty food, the sensuous beauty and comfort of the noble old rooms, had to say to this affection of hers for the Le Gytes. The swinging lamps, the delicate appointments of the table, the lovely dresses of the ladies—what a contrast it all was to the barrenness of the Rectory parlour, with the shabby old Rector digging among his Greek roots by the light of a single candle!

Be it said, however, at this stage of our story, that in the days now to come, Clarice was not without the touch and fire of a real and exalted passion. The faulty

can no more escape the power of love than the wholly estimable, and it is as real in the one case as the other. If Mostyn Eliot might have said with Orlando, "What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue? I cannot speak to her"—so much did his usual glibness and bonhomie fail him in the presence of the woman he loved—Clarice, too, was not untouched by the divine reality of love. Little genuine thrills of happiness—trembling sighs of deep content—these were not unknown to her, and when her lover's lips clung to hers in the first sweet kiss of betrothal, and her heart beat against his, she could have vowed a fealty which should never fail. She had her "day"; her little heaven below, an experience that was destined to leave its indelible mark upon all her future life. But Clarice was like the cat that loves the warmth and comfort, and purrs when it is pleased. Mostyn—her grand young lover—was dear—very, very dear; the thought of parting with him ran through her heart like a knife. He was tender, loyal, brave—a lover to be proud of truly; but, if only in addition to all these fine qualities he had been as rich as—as Blazebrook Le Gyte, for instance! Fancy owning the dear old Manor House, being able to walk through the grand oak-panelled rooms and think they were one's very own; besides all that, fancy having a house in Park Lane, the best and most fashionable part of London, so Clarice was told, and a husband who belonged to the Four-in-hand Club! These were dazzling visions. They only visited the dusky tress-crowned head when Mostyn was not by to charm them away; but they were there, deep down, like some buried, poisonous root destined to bear bitter and acrid fruit.

When the parting came, what a wrench it was! Clarice, lying back in her lover's arms—feeling his tears upon her face—felt that indeed this severance was as the bitterness of death itself. Half unconscious, she still knew that he laid her gently and tenderly upon a couch, heard his smothered—

"God keep you, my darling, till we meet again——" heard in a strange, muffled way, as of a sound far distant, the clang of the Rectory door, knew that the ordeal was past, and her lover gone. . . . The violets were in blossom then. Mostyn crushed some of their delicate blossoms as he rushed across the lawn, away, away, from the dearest thing he had in the world.

Before the roses were in bloom against the Rectory walls, a horrible thick darkness was brooding over the length and breadth of the land. Men's hearts failed them for fear. Women's eyes were wept blind and dim, sorrowing with unspeakable anguish for their loved ones.

Who amongst us can forget the news of the Indian Mutiny—the horror of slain men, butchered women and little ones, the cry of whose blood went up to heaven from the ground?

Those boy-ensigns, fresh from Addiscombe, slain in cold blood, cut off in the brightness of their youth! What English mother but mourned them as her own?

One line only reached Clarice from Mostyn Eliot:

"The regiment is off to Gwalior to Sir Hugh Rose. I am writing this on a drum-head, to seize a possible chance of sending it to England. The knowledge that you hold me in your thoughts and prayers is my best shield and buckler in these terrible days—my darling!"

When Clarice got this pitiful little letter, she kissed it madly, let her tears fall upon it like rain, pressed it to her bosom—the bosom that heaved with rending sighs and sobs—and then she burnt it slowly and deliberately in the flame of a perfumed spirit-lamp that stood on a little table by her side.

She could hardly do less than burn Mostyn Eliot's letter, for—when it reached her, she was in her dainty boudoir in the house in Park Lane—she was Blazebrook Le Gyte's wife.

PART II. HIS DAY.

OUR story takes a leap forward—a leap of ten years.

We are in Malta now—Byron's "little military hothouse"—and Malta is looking very beautiful, anyway, with its deep purple waters, star-gemmed by the head-lights of countless "dysos," and canopied by a sky as purple and as brightly gemmed; sweet with the breath of orange-blossoms and lemon-bloom; musical with the fitful harmonies of boatman's song, lightly-touched mandoline, and in the Strada Reale, opposite the main guard, by the subdued but inspiriting strains of a band. All over the island bugle has answered bugle, as each regiment, lying in the different lines, has called its wanderers home; the bells of the many churches have ceased to clang, for that day, at least.

Lights glimmer in the overhanging balconies of the houses—houses gay with coloured draperies and hanging plants, which now look grey and ghostly in the flickering light. Carriages are rattling along the busy street, and the starlight glints on glittering uniforms and ladies gaily dight. It is a perfect kaleidoscope of changing colour, and it melts and sways, parts and joins company again in true kaleidoscope fashion. Then it concentrates itself at the Palace gate, and so winds out of sight, up the noble flight of spotless marble stairs.

All this means that His Excellency the Governor gives a ball to-night, and that all Malta who is anybody is there. A Royal Princess, fair and beautiful to look upon as a May morning, is the chief guest of the evening.

As we enter the grand sweep of rooms running parallel to the gallery which is lined with glittering suits of armour, she may be seen at the end of the vista, bending with that marvellous mingling of gentleness and dignity for which she is famous, in acknowledgement of the profound salute of an officer in Line uniform, who is in the act of being presented to her by the Governor himself. There are far more brilliant uniforms in those dazzling rooms than that worn by the man thus honoured, but few breasts carry such a blaze of medals as his; and there, amid the lesser lights, shines the Cross that is coveted of all.

It is ten years since we saw Mostyn Eliot, now commanding the 193rd Regiment of Foot. Let us note what changes time has wrought.

The tawny locks are as crisp and close-cropped as ever; but above the temples they glisten with silver threads, and the face—the dear, true face which we last saw blurred with tears, and bending over the pale brow of Clarice Damien, is scarred down one cheek with an ugly seam, and scarred—ah, Heaven! how much more deeply with lines that tell of suffering sternly borne, of loss of faith in a woman's purity and truth, of a stormy life which has left the clear, bright, boyish days of yore far behind.

And this is a woman's work. Clarice had her "day," and this is what she did with it.

There was a dark-eyed, straight-looking boy, fresh from Addiscombe, who went out with the 193rd to India. His name was Hugh Dennison, and Mostyn

Eliot "took him up" not a little. It was this youngster who, in the dreadful days of the Mutiny, chanced to see in a stray newspaper the marriage of Clarice Damien to Blazebrook Le Gyte. The cry he uttered brought Mostyn Eliot to his side.

For days the man went about with a fixed staring look in his eyes that boded no good to any who crossed his path. He was seen to cut down fourteen rebel Sepoys in quick rotation, men who were hiding to fire from their ambush upon the English. It may be said that in a certain way Clarice won him the Victoria Cross. His life had so little value in his eyes that he was absolutely reckless; yet bore—so said those about him—a charm in his breast that made Death glance aside. Those days seem long past now. Ten years may be longer than a lifetime.

After a few gracious words from the Princess, Colonel Eliot passed on with a second profound salutation, to make way for others. His tall stature and fine proportions made him a notable figure even in that brilliant gathering, wherein "fair women and brave men" mingled in motley groups or swayed in the mazes of the dance.

He paced slowly towards the long gallery, glancing with a smile at our old friend, once Lieutenant, now Captain Grimper, over head and ears in a flirtation with a comely damsel, in a wonderful gown of white and rose. That aspiring being had not found a grave in the burning East, and had got over the blight of the refusal of ten years ago. Colonel Eliot lingered a moment by Mrs. Masters' chair, to that obese lady's radiant and evident delight; but was far too wary to bring himself to an anchor on the neighbouring lounge she obligingly indicated. He knew her "tricks and her manners" too well. Slowly sauntering onwards he met his closest friends, Major and Mrs. Delacombe of the Engineers, the lady, as usual, faultlessly attired, also—as usual—radiantly happy, and flirting—as usual again—with her own husband, instead of with somebody else's, as was, it must be confessed, somewhat the fashion.

"Adamantine man!" she said, laughing, as she held out her slim and daintily-gloved hand, "have you seen the beautiful widow about whom the whole garrison is raving?"

"You know I have been shooting in Catania," he answered, laughing, too; "there are no bewitching widows there."

"You would not tell us if there were," replied the merry lady, tapping him on the arm with her plumed fan; "but, seriously, Colonel Eliot—Mostyn—if you do not capitulate, if that stony heart of yours is not touched when you see—"

Even as she spoke, the whole face of the man she was addressing changed, and she caught her breath and clutched her husband's arm, keeping a pained and amazed silence.

Coming down the corridor, sweeping along between the serried ranks of knightless armour, her long silken skirts trailing on the polished floor, Mostyn Eliot once more saw Clarice Le Gyte—the woman who had betrayed him; the woman who had shamelessly sold herself for wealth and luxury, loving him, as well he knew, all the time.

Mrs. Delacombe, glancing wildly from the one to the other, saw Mrs. Le Gyte stand as suddenly still as though some one had struck her in the face; saw every vestige of colour fade from cheek and lip; saw a hunted, fearsome look dawn in the great, dark eyes that were fixed on Mostyn Eliot's face.

"Ah, Eliot," said the Governor's military secretary, who was the beautiful widow's escort, "glad to see you back again." Then, with a courteous bend towards the lady on his arm, "Mrs. Le Gyte, may I present to you my friend, Colonel Mostyn Eliot!"

She was white as death; but she had got herself in hand again. As the Colonel of the 193rd bowed low, she, too, bent with the easy, willowy grace he so well remembered. How beautiful she was, in her perfectly fitting robe of black silk and lace, with diamond stars shimmering in her hair, and gleaming on her white bosom! One would have thought her loveliness, the stricken, pleading glance of her sad eyes, might have softened any man's heart. But men had never even remembered for years back that Mostyn Eliot had once been called "the boy." The brightness of the old days had died long since, killed by a woman's hand; and we can remember there was a stern side to our hero's character even then.

"I hardly need to be presented to Mrs. Le Gyte," he said, speaking very slowly and distinctly, "we are quite old friends—cousins by marriage, in fact. It is only a strange fate that has kept us apart so long."

Mrs. Delacombe had been hurried away by her husband, who was afraid she might

make matters worse by betraying surprise and agitation. The Governor's A.D.C. came up to summon the secretary to his Excellency's side.

These two so strangely met, so long parted, were left in that solitude a crowd makes so complete.

"Permit me," said Mostyn Eliot, and once again the hand of Clarice touched his arm.

He felt her shiver at the contact. Maybe he would not have cared to confess how his own heart leapt and throbbed. He was angry with his own eyes for finding her so fair; it maddened him to remember that the diamonds that sparkled on her breast and amid the little tendrils of her hair, must have been bought with—Blazebrook Le Gyte's money. A muttered curse rose to his lips, and had to be bitten back.

They paced the long gallery slowly up and down. It was his "day" now, and oh! how pitiless he was!

Ignoring all the past as though it had never been, he made himself courteous and charming as to a perfect stranger whose acquaintance he had just made. He spoke of the climate, the news of the Garrison, a field day about to come off, which he advised her to make a point of seeing. By not so much as one word did he allude to the past; by not so much as one veiled expression did he show that, for him, memory had one living impulse left. He told her many interesting facts about the Palace itself; asked her if she had seen "guard-mounting" in the Square opposite, and, if not, would she like to do so? He pointed out to her Mrs. Carbonel, wife of Captain Carbonel of his regiment, and said she was considered "a very pretty woman." Was she not indeed looking charming to-night? He, Mostyn Eliot, really felt quite proud of her.

Slower and more and more heavily came the tortured creature's breath. At last she could only reply in monosyllables, panting as she spoke. At this her companion put on an air of gentle surprise.

"Surely," he said, with a mocking gleam in his eyes, and a smile that was not good to see upon his lips, "you are ill! The heat of the room overcomes you. Let me find your friends. You are not here alone!"

"You are cruel—cruel," she murmured, with shaking lips.

"It is a lesson I learnt from you."

There was no sleep for Mostyn Eliot

that night; indeed, when he got home from the Palace, there was not much night left to sleep through; but, of such as there was he took no account. Off with his gold-braided tunic, on with a loose smoking jacket, then, an hour or two of restless pacing up and down his room which looked out into a garden of sweet flowers on one side, and down the glacis to Calcare Gate at the other. Surely, he thought, this conflict will cease when the sounds of a new day awake about me, and life begins again! The light grew, the sound of the sentry being changed at Fort Ricasoli came faintly over the quiet water; one, two, three steps, rattle of arms presented; one, two, three again.

How still was the breaking of the day! What wondrous rainbow colours touched and gemmed the pale surface of the sea! Bah! what good was it to babble to himself like that of earth and sky when all the while the undercurrent of his thoughts was one wild turmoil of tossing thought, centred about Clarice Le Gyte? How her beauty haunted him! The girl of twenty-three, lithe, softly dark, had given, after all, but faint promise of the ripe, rich rose of loveliness that was still to come. And more than this, more than her beauty, was the spell upon him of the passion-laden eyes, the exquisite intensity of the love-light to be read in them, as they rested on his own.

"She has thought of me all the years," he muttered, and shivered from head to heel at the thought. Still, she had sinned, she must suffer. She had had her day—this was his. He was no weakling to fall at the feet of the woman who had once betrayed him—not he!

As the day wore on the Colonel spread dismay among the "youngsters" by his grave, set face at the orderly-room; while defaulters shook in their ill-fitting shoes.

Later in the day it was easy for Mostyn Eliot to procure as much information as he craved for as to "the beautiful widow." She was staying in Strada Stretta, together with a Mr. and Mrs. Daventry, who had brought letters of introduction to the Governor and the Admiral, and whose yacht, the "Bonnie Bluebelle," lay in Grand Harbour. She had only been in the island a few days, but quite long enough to set the place in a blaze. All day long some gossip or other about her came to the Colonel's ears. And his feet seemed made of lead, so heavy were they, as they bore him away from the neighbourhood of the

Strada Stretta; and winged like the feet of Apollo as he neared that same locality. He said to himself: "She will not expect me, after the way I behaved last night, after the brute I made of myself." Then a voice in his heart whispered: "She will long for you—she will be ready to forgive—if you will."

Glad was Mostyn Eliot when the bright sunny day declined, and victory over self was still his. The "Bonnie Bluebelle" was to sail shortly. Perhaps he should never, never see Clarice again. . . .

He was dining with one of the ancient noblesse of the Maltese aristocracy, and, when fitly caparisoned, started forth. He was distraught and unlike himself all the evening, returning earlier than usual to his quarters. In the simple manner that obtains in tropical climes, the doors of his house stood wide open. His soldier-servant had gone to bed. How silent it all was, and how grey and ghostly looked the flowers in the garden—not a blossom stirring in the windless night! Stars above in the sky, stars—wandering ones—below on the sea, the tinkle of a bell, as a goat, grazing on the glacis, shook its ragged head.

A moment he stood in the doorway. She would think him mad, of course, at that late hour; but, how he longed to go to her; how the "spirit in his feet" moved him to cross the cornstores, and betake himself to Strada Stretta! With an impatient gesture he turned into the silent house, and up the broad stone stairs. Tatties hung over the doorways, and, as he pushed aside the one that belonged to his sitting-room, he was conscious of a figure standing by the window at the upper end.

It was a woman in a "faldette"—that graceful Maltese mantle that completely conceals the face, and falls over the shoulders. Colonel Eliot was in no humour for an adventure of gallantry, or if the intruder was some Maltese woman intent upon "permission" to marry a soldier, why the deuce had she chosen such an unearthly hour to make her appeal? He flung his cigarette out of the near window, laid his forage-cap on the table, and advanced towards the unknown.

The faldette fell back; a gracious and beautiful head was revealed.

"Mostyn, it is I—Clarice."

"Madam," said the man thus addressed, "you have wandered into my rooms by mistake. I deplore the careless-

ness of my servant, who ought to have been better on guard. Permit me to escort you to your friends, who are doubtless troubled by your absence."

"Mostyn, Mostyn, have pity! I have come to ask of you forgiveness. Do not speak to me like that; you break my heart, you kill me! See, say if I do not love you! I have risked all a woman holds dear."

"What does a woman, such as you, hold dear? Her faith? No! Her honour! Surely not. You—sold—yours."

If every word had been a blow stinging her across the face, she could not have covered and winced more pitifully.

As he uttered each cruel and cutting reproach, he had moved a step nearer to her. They were within half a yard of each other now—pale face opposite pale face. They stood stammering and staring. Oh, the pity of it—they who had loved so fondly in the dear, dead past!

"Do you know that you murdered my life?" hissed Mostyn Eliot, through his teeth.

She stretched out her arms in an ineffable gesture of despair.

"It is the old, terrible law," she moaned, "the old, pitiless justice—a life for a life. You are killing my life now——"

"What did you come here for?" he said, hurling the words at her as though they were stones to slay her.

"There was no other way; the yacht sails to-morrow. We have dined at the Palace. My friends are gone on to a reception. I said I was ill; they will not miss me. Do not be so angry with me; I could not help it. Oh, Mostyn, Mostyn! have some pity on me. I have loved you all through the years—day by day, hour by hour—of all that miserable life of hateful bondage. I grew to love the memory of you as you had been to me in the dear old days. Heaven only—and no other—knows what I lived through. When they told me my husband was dead, I covered my face with my hands. They thought I was weeping; but, Mostyn, think what a woman must have suffered for it to come to that!—I was afraid that I should laugh out loud. Can you not find one little corner in your heart that will soften to me? Only say that you forgive me! Give me back one sweet moment of the dear old days. My life has been so barren and so joyless since we parted. Hold me in your arms for one short instant; kiss me once; give me back the

womanhood that has died out of me, and then I will go my way . . . content."

Never once had his eyes left her face as she thus pleaded—his eyes that burned like living fires. His very lips showed white under the sweep of his moustache; his hands rested on the table by which he stood, and it shook with the tremor and the pressure of them.

She came close up to his side. The faldette fell from her shoulder. The lovely, pallid face, down which the tears were coursing, was raised to his in mute, yet passionate, supplication.

Suddenly the tears gathered in his eyes too, as though called forth in answer to hers. His face changed, quivered, softened.

"And you have loved me like this, all through the years, you love me like this, still—"

"I love you like this . . . still . . . I shall love you like this . . . always—say, Mostyn, do I not deserve in return for such a love . . . forgiveness? . . . It is all I ask."

He had turned away from her; and, with folded arms, and head erect, was gazing out across the moonlit glacia; yet saw nothing but a blurred radiance, by reason of a mist of tears.

"When you spoke to me as you did last night—each word cut through my heart like a knife. Yet, you see, I did not wince. . . . I have taken my punishment—it was well deserved—but it is over now, is it not . . . Mostyn? We may part . . . friends!"

For all answer he turned and caught her in his arms, strained her to his breast, covered her face with passionate, fond kisses; called her "little sweetheart," as he had done in the dear, sweet days of old.

She had had her day—he had had his—and now, this was their day. . . . A little later, a woman, wholly concealed by a Maltese faldette, might have been seen taking her way quietly towards the town, while, at a long distance behind her, strolled an English officer, in mess uniform, meditatively smoking a cigarette.

As the woman passed into the shadow of the Reale Gate, the other stood a moment still, then swept off his forage-cap, and turned homewards, swinging it gently by his side. Mostyn Eliot was too happy, just then, to walk beneath the star-gemmed canopy of heaven otherwise than bare-headed.

The "Bonnie Bluebelle" did not sail the

next morning, and the garrison was electrified by a report that the Colonel of the 193rd was engaged to the beautiful widow. The military secretary looked grave; the P.M.O. assured his friends at the club that he had never seen any reason yet to modify his opinion that men in the Service were best unmarried—at which the surgeon of the Rifle Brigade laughed, and had to explain that he was tickled by the remembrance of a clever thing a man had said to him the day before. People in general were amazed; but, by degrees, a whisper wandered here and there like a gentle breeze among a bed of flowers, and this was what it said:

"On revient toujours à ses premières amours."

REDMAYNE'S WIFE.

By T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

It would be impossible for me to express in anything like reasonable terms the astonishment, not to speak of a much stronger feeling, with which I one day received the news that Philip Redmayne, who had left home ostensibly for a week's holiday, had brought a wife back with him. Naturally enough, I at first pooh-poohed the news as being the invention of some one who had a grudge against him, or was minded to make him the victim of a foolish joke; but a few hours later the news was confirmed in a way which left me no room for doubt. The wary bachelor of thirty, who had been unsuccessfully angled for by so many mammas with marriageable daughters, had been caught at last. Phil Redmayne was really and truly a married man!

I was his godfather, and had been his guardian till he came of age, and I had always felt as much regard for the boy as if he had been my own son. Not, mind you, that there was any likelihood of my ever having a son of my own, for I had definitely abjured matrimony and all its snares ever since that day, thirty years before, when Matilda Jane—

But that is not to the purpose of my narrative.

Here I may take the opportunity of introducing myself more specifically to the reader's notice. My name, then, is Josiah Crocker, of the firm of Crocker and Wibaby, brewers, Tidsthorpe, Dissex.

It was to Tidsthorpe that my godson came on his arrival at man's estate, and when he had served his time in the office of the land surveyor to whom, at his own request, he had been articled. It was then that I had the pleasure of handing over to him certain coupons of the value of nine thousand pounds, for to that amount had his inheritance grown through careful husbandry on my part during the years of his minority.

Before Phil was many months older he had set up in business at Tidsthorpe on his own account as land surveyor, estate agent, and I know not what besides, for he was eminently of a speculative turn of mind, and by no means disposed to confine himself to the strict lines of the profession to which he had been brought up. He took to the buying and selling of house property, and opened a wharf at the new railway station, with a patent apparatus of his own invention for screening coal. Then he contracted an interest in more than one of the schooners engaged in the coasting trade between the neighbouring town of Perrybeach and sundry other ports. A little later he became proprietor of the Haredale limekilns, situated about three miles from Tidsthorpe, which had proved a disastrous speculation to their previous owner, who was glad to get rid of them at any price.

No thought of taking to himself a wife seemed ever to enter Phil's mind; and I could not but applaud his good sense in copying the example of his godfather in the way of keeping himself aloof from all feminine entanglements. All the harder, therefore, to bear was the blow when it did fall.

But when Phil brought his wife to see me—which he did on the day following their arrival at home—I almost found in my heart to forgive him his folly. She was so sweetly pretty, so fresh, so innocent-looking, so charming in every way that, had I been thirty years younger, and had the chance been put in my way, I would not have answered for the strength of my resolves never to venture into the pitfall of matrimony.

Her manner was child-like and caressing, and she spoke with just enough suspicion of a foreign accent to lend an added piquancy to all she said. Her name was Mimi—Mimi Duclos it had been before her marriage. Her father, a Frenchman, had married an English girl, and she had been brought up partly in the country of one parent, and partly in that of the other.

In any case, Mrs. Phil was a charming little body—one could scarcely think of her as a full-grown woman—and much might be forgiven the man who had chosen to fling behind him the freedom and pleasures of bachelorhood for the sake of her bonny blue eyes.

Up to the time of his marriage Phil had been content to live the life of a bachelor in lodgings; now, however, it was only to be expected that he and his wife would want a house of their own. Still, it was a matter of surprise, not to me only, but to the town generally, when it became known that Phil had decided to set up house-keeping at Needwood Lodge, an old-fashioned country mansion which stood in its own grounds a mile or more away on the London Road. It was true the place was his own, he having bought the lease of it, a bargain, a couple of years before, since which time it had been without a tenant. But it was a big, rambling house, roomy enough to accommodate not merely a large family, but a numerous staff of domestics, and to keep it up in anything like proper style would necessitate an income considerably larger than anybody imagined Phil Redmayne to be in receipt of. I did not fail to remonstrate with him the first time I saw him after the report reached my ears; but he only laughed in his pleasant, easy-going way, and said:

"I thought that by this time, godfather, you gave me credit for knowing my way about. Is it not more sensible to live under my own roof, rather than pay rent elsewhere, with the added risk of the Lodge remaining for an indefinite time without a tenant? And as for 'keeping it up,' I shall do that in a very humble sort of way, you may be sure. Besides, it is just possible that my balance at the bank is bigger than you have a notion of, and I may whisper in your ear that Mimi herself will have a tidy lump of money when she comes of age."

I was glad to hear the latter fact, and it also pleased me to learn that he had been prudent enough, immediately after marriage, to insure his life for five thousand pounds. As time went on, however, I found that Phil's notion of keeping up the Lodge "in a humble sort of way" differed very materially from mine. In the first place, the house was put into what is, I believe, called "thorough decorative repair," the bill for doing which must have amounted to a pretty penny; while half-a-dozen men were hard

at work doing the same by the gardens and shrubberies. Then somebody came down from London with a pocket-book and a measuring-tape, and a week or two later one van-load of furniture after another arrived by railway, till the Lodge would hold no more. A little later came the house-warming, an event which was talked of in Tidsthorpe for many a day to come. Not every one to whom an invitation had been sent honoured the Lodge with his or her presence on the occasion; but for all that, pretty Mrs. Redmayne, in her bridal costume, was the radiant centre of a throng of people such as had never before been brought together in our little town.

Before long the young wife might be met driving about the town and neighbourhood in a brand-new victoria, which, together with a pair of matched ponies, had been her husband's birthday gift. And now a week never went by without at least one dinner party or dance at the Lodge; and, as a natural consequence of such profuse hospitality, when Mr. and Mrs. Redmayne were not entertaining visitors themselves, few evenings passed on which they omitted to return the compliment by visiting elsewhere.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Philip Redmayne's married life was about a year and a half old, I, who had scarcely known what it was to have a day's illness, was suddenly laid by the heels. As soon as I was well enough to travel, I was ordered off to one of the German spas, and told that I must on no account think of business for at least six months to come. My sister Charlotte—like me, too sensible to marry—who had nursed me through my illness, accompanied me abroad. Phil and his wife came to the station to see us off. Mimi had hardly let a day pass during my illness without calling to enquire how I was; but that dragon of a Charlotte, who had taken an unaccountable dislike to her, would never allow her to come near me, although, as Phil told me afterwards, Mimi had implored her more than once, with tears in her eyes, to be allowed to relieve her for an hour or two now and then in her attendance at my bedside. That day, as she took leave of me, and held up her mouth to be kissed, it was plain that her April-blue eyes were not so bright as they usually were, and there was a little break in her voice as she wished me good-bye,

and laid her commands on me to get well and come back home as speedily as possible. It comforted me somewhat to think that should I not live to come back, the name of Mimi Redmayne had not been forgotten in my will—although not for the world would I have had Charlotte made aware of the fact.

It was not till seven months later that permission was given me to set my face homeward, during the whole of which time, although I had had plenty of business communications from my partner, no personal news of any kind, having reference to the circle of my Tidsthorpe friends, had reached me. When, therefore, I was told, within ten minutes of my arrival at home, that Philip Redmayne had disappeared three days before, and that all sorts of rumours were rife in the town, some of them hinting at foul play, while others hardly veiled the insinuation that he had gone away of his own accord, because he found the place too hot for him to stay in any longer, I felt—to use a common expression—as if I hardly knew whether I was standing on my head or my heels. The first thing I resolved upon doing was to go up to Needwood Lodge and ferret out the facts of the case for myself.

Mimi burst into tears and flung herself into my arms the moment I entered the room. I soothed her and calmed her as best I could; but some time passed before I was able to elicit from her a connected account of what had really happened.

It appeared that, on the previous Saturday morning, her husband had left home at his usual hour for going to business. After calling at his office and looking over his letters, he had arranged to walk out as far as the Haredale limekilns, which, as already mentioned, he had bought some three or four years before. Latterly, he had been working the kilns at a considerable loss, and on that very morning he had arranged to meet his foreman there, pay off the "hands," and have the fires raked out.

It seemed to him preferable to let the kilns stand idle awhile rather than go on being money out of pocket week after week. After finishing his business at the kilns he would walk into Perrybeach—it was only a matter of four or five miles—where he was to meet a certain Mr. Dallison, who had agreed to buy Redmayne's interest in a couple of coasting schooners for the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds. As the missing man had arranged his programme, so had he pro-

ceeded to carry it out. He had settled his business at the kilns in due course, and, later on, had met Mr. Dallison, who had paid him the amount agreed on, partly in notes, and partly in gold, after which they had dined together, and had not separated till between six and seven o'clock, by which time it was quite dark. In reply to a question at parting, Phil had said that a friend of his—not mentioning any name—had promised him a lift home in his trap. But be that as it might, so far as could be ascertained, Mr. Dallison was the last person who had spoken with him. From the moment of his quitting the roof of the "Red Lion Hotel," Phillip Redmayne had vanished utterly.

In the course of Monday notice had been given to the police, and a description of the missing man circulated far and wide. It was now Tuesday night, and no tidings whatever of him had come to hand. Mimi's firm belief, reiterated again and again, was that her husband had been lured to some lonely spot, and then murdered for the sake of the money in his possession; and although I pointed out to her how unlikely it was that any one except Mr. Dallison could be aware that he had so large a sum about him, I could in no wise shake her conviction on the point.

Well, time went on, till a month had gone by without bringing any clue to the mystery of Redmayne's disappearance. Meanwhile, poor Mimi was having a bad time of it at the Lodge. Phil's unexplained absence brought to light a state of affairs which both surprised and shocked me. Not only was he proved to have been over head and ears in debt, but the Lodge itself, together with whatever property he had on which money could be raised, was mortgaged up to the hilt. At the time of his disappearance he was virtually a bankrupt. Of course, the extravagant style of living into which he had so weakly fallen after his marriage had something to do with this sad state of things; but a few words which Mimi let fall one day told me all I needed to know. For the last year Phil had been speculating on the Stock Exchange, with what result was now patent to all the world.

In order to stem the storm in some measure, Mimi, by my advice, removed from the Lodge into some quiet lodgings in the town. Everything she left behind went to the hammer, and the horde of clamouring creditors were to some extent appeased thereby.

The little woman bore the change, great though it was, in a way which did not fail to elicit my admiration. The mention of Phil's name nearly always brought tears to her eyes; but in other respects she was quiet and self-possessed in a remarkable degree. She never wavered in her belief that her husband had come to his end through foul play, although I must confess that I myself had strong doubts on the point. As a matter of course, not till some absolute proof of Phil's decease should be forthcoming, would the Stock Insurance Company entertain Mimi's claim for the five thousand pounds, which her husband had settled absolutely upon her within a few weeks of their marriage.

Not long, however, was it before the requisite proof was forthcoming, and that in a way as startling as it was unexpected.

I had gone to call upon her one morning on a matter of business, when I could not help noticing that she was several times affected by brief fits of nervous trembling, such as I had never remarked in her before. It seemed to me that she was far from well, and so I told her, recommending at the same time that she should at once call in medical advice.

"You are mistaken, dear Uncle Joey," she replied. "I am not at all ill; at least, not in the way you think. I know it is very silly of me to say so; but I have been frightened. Oh, terribly!"

"In what way have you been frightened, my dear?"

"By a dream. You smile, dear uncle; but wait till I have told you what it was. I dreamt it the night before last, and again last night, exactly the same dream. Horrible, horrible!"

She shuddered, and pressed her fingers to her eyes, and for a few moments seemed altogether overcome.

Then she went on to tell me that in her dream she had seen two men, both strangers to her, carrying between them the insensible body of another man, which she at once recognised as that of her husband. Emerging, with their burden, from the shelter of a wood, they carried it up a piece of rising ground beyond, till they reached the summit of a low cliff, close against the face of which were built the limekilns already mentioned. Then, after swinging the body to and fro a few times, that it might acquire a momentum, they gave it one final swing, which sent it flying over the edge of the cliff, full into the wide-gaping mouth of one of the kilns.

Such was Mimi's singular dream as related by her to me. No wonder that her nerves were shaken by it after all she had gone through a little while before.

"If I dream it a third time I shall feel sure that it is true—that it is a revelation from the dead," she said to me at parting, "and I shall take some men and have the limekiln thoroughly searched."

Well, according to her account, she dreamt the same thing again on the third consecutive night. In any case, next morning she got three or four men together, and proceeded with them to the kilns, and pointing out one, ordered them to set to work to dig out the contents, which had been left undisturbed since the day of Phil's disappearance when he had ordered the fires to be raked out. Sure enough, the men had not been at work many minutes before they came upon a small quantity of human bones, all in a more or less calcined state. Further search brought to light a skull, two or three metal buttons, and the blade of a pocket-knife. Everything else had been wholly destroyed by the action of the lime.

At the inquest which was held on the remains, Clisby, the tailor, deposed that the buttons found in the kiln were exactly similar to those on a covert-coat he had made for Redmayne a few months before, which coat the latter was proved to have been wearing on the day of his disappearance. Mr. Dimes, the dentist, deposed that the skull produced was short of three teeth, one in the upper jaw, and two in the lower, and that he had himself at different times extracted three corresponding teeth of Redmayne's. Finally, the knife-blade, which was a somewhat peculiar one, was sworn to by three or four people as being exactly like one which Phil had been in the habit of carrying. The jury brought in a verdict in accordance with the evidence; the remains were interred as those of Philip Redmayne; and Mimi, who was an object of universal commiseration, now felt herself justified in putting on widow's weeds.

CHAPTER III.

THERE was now no reason why the five thousand pounds insurance money should not be paid, and at the widow's request I proceeded to lay her claim before the company. In due course, that is to say, after the officials had satisfied themselves with regard to the facts of the case, a

cheque for the amount came to hand, which, at my suggestion, was deposited to Mrs. Redmayne's credit in the local bank.

It was a week later when Mimi called upon me, accompanied by a tall, dark, rather good-looking young man, whom she introduced to me as her brother Pierre. I could trace no likeness whatever between the two—indeed, till that day I had never heard of the existence of such a person, but that was not to be wondered at, seeing that my godson had never told me anything about the relatives or antecedents of his wife. Mimi's object in calling on me was to tell me that she and her brother were going to set out for France on the morrow, with the intention of looking up the trustees who had charge of the inheritance which would become due to her on her twenty-first birthday—a fortnight hence. She would probably be away for three weeks or a month, she went on to say; meanwhile, she had paid for her lodgings some weeks in advance, and had arranged that they should be kept for her till her return.

So she left us, and time went on till a couple of months had gone by; but still Mimi returned not. I knew not what to think. The most feasible supposition was, that for some reason or other, the law's proverbial delay had come between her and her inheritance, and that she was awaiting on the spot the settlement of her affairs. But even supposing such to be the case, why did not the young man write to me? She could not fail to know how uneasy her long silence would make me. But my uneasiness deepened into a nameless apprehension when, in answer to an inquiry on my part, the manager of the bank informed me that Mrs. Redmayne had withdrawn the whole amount of her deposit on the afternoon of the day before she left Tidsthorpe.

One by one the weeks sped slowly by, till the third month, from the date of Mimi's departure had come and gone, without bringing any sign or token that she was still in the land of the living, when one dark autumn night, close on ten o'clock, just as I had lighted my last pipe, and mixed my last jorum of grog, before turning in, my servant brought me word that there was a man at the door, who said he had called on a matter of great importance, but refused to send in his name.

My thoughts at once flew to Mimi; perhaps the man was the bearer of a message from her; so I at once gave orders for

him to be shown in. His first act after the servant had left the room was to turn the key of the door, and thereby lock up himself and me together. I rose to my feet in some alarm; but before I could enquire the meaning of so strange a proceeding, he had flung his broad-brimmed hat aside, and had plucked off his wig and long, black beard, leaving revealed to my staring and bewildered eyes none other than Philip Redmayne!

Yes, he and no other; but, alas, how changed!

For a few moments I was so taken aback, so utterly dumbfounded, that I could not have uttered a word had my life depended on it. He was the first to speak.

"I am neither an optical illusion nor a ghost, godfather, although, by the look in your face, you seem to think I must be one or the other," he said, with a poor imitation of his old merry laugh. "I am veritable flesh and blood, I assure you; or, perhaps, I ought rather to say skin and bone, for there's not much else left of me by this time."

"Then those were not your remains that were found in the limekiln?" I contrived to gasp out.

"Not mine, most certainly."

"Then may I be permitted to ask where you have been all this long time, and why you have allowed everybody, your poor wife included, to believe you dead?"

"It is to enquire about my wife that I am here to-night. Tell me, where is she? What has become of her?"

"She left for France, several weeks ago, in order to see about her inheritance."

"Ah! And the five thousand pounds insurance money?"

"She took every farthing of it with her. But how do you happen to know that the insurance money was paid?"

"Tell me, did she go alone?" he demanded, without heeding my question.

"She was accompanied by her brother Pierre, a dark, good-looking young fellow, who——"

Redmayne sank into a chair with a groan.

"It is as I suspected. My worst fears are realised! Oh, fool! fool!"

The words came from his lips in broken and half-strangled accents, while a strange, grey pallor overspread his features. I was afraid he was about to faint, so I made haste to pour out a little spirit and offer it to him. He drank it eagerly, and in a little while a faint colour came back

into his cheeks. Then I made him draw up an easy-chair in front of the fire, and a little later, when my sister and the servants had retired for the night, I went to the larder, and brought him thence something to eat.

He was indeed changed since I had last set eyes on him. In the first place, he looked at least a dozen years older. His cheeks were sunken, his eyes seemed to have receded further into their orbits, and his brown hair was now plentifully streaked with grey. As he sat there, with his chest bent in and his shoulders half-way up to his ears, he looked like a man bowed down by the weight of some irremediable calamity.

Hour after hour we sat, till the pale daylight surprised us. How much or how little of his strange story he had, in the first instance, intended to tell me, I had no means of knowing. As circumstances fell out, he ended by telling me everything. Space will not allow of my setting it down here at length and in his own words. All I can do is to sketch its more salient features in outline.

When Philip Redmayne married Miss Duclos, he believed that in her he had secured an angel of innocence and candour. Only by degrees did his eyes become opened to the fact that she was not merely a consummate actress, but one of those beautiful enigmas who seem sent into the world on purpose to shake one's faith in the evidence of one's own senses—a creature utterly devoid of moral principle, who, at nineteen years of age, was already an accomplished hypocrite; who cared for no one in the world but herself; who loved lies for their own sake, and would often tell them in preference to the truth, even when the latter would have served her purpose equally as well. Phil's awakening, if slow, was none the less inevitable; but even after he had realised to the full the sort of being to whom he had tied himself for life, such was his infatuation for her, so strong was the spell with which her beauty still held him, that, to all intents, he remained as completely her slave as on the day he married her. Not even when the gratification of her caprices and extravagances was urging him fast and still faster on the road to ruin had he either the power or the will to draw back, or to snap a single link of the chain by which he was being dragged to destruction.

The end was drawing very near, and Phil's resources, in the way of raising money, were all but exhausted, when his wife pro-

posed to him a certain nefarious scheme for defrauding the insurance company, which he came after a time to listen to and ultimately to fall in with. It was arranged that he should disappear and go into hiding for a time; and that after a little while such conclusive proofs of his death should be forthcoming as would satisfy not merely the public at large, but the insurance company, that he was really defunct. Then when Mimi should have obtained the five thousand pounds, she was to join him, and together they were to try their fortunes in the New World. The human remains found in the kiln had been put there by Redmayne himself on the night of his disappearance. They had formed portions of a skeleton which had been left in his charge a few years before by a friend of his, a naval surgeon, who had never reclaimed them. The extraction of three teeth to correspond with Phil's missing teeth had been a device of Mimi's, to whom, indeed, both the inception and the working out of nearly all the details of the plot were due. To what extent the precious scheme prospered, we have already seen.

"And the inheritance which she is supposed to have gone to France for the purpose of realising," I said, "has that any foundation in fact?"

"None whatever, although even I did not discover it to be a myth till nearly a year after my marriage."

"And her brother Pierre?"

"She has no brother. He is a scoundrel whom she loved before she met me, only at that time he was desperately poor. They have gone off together, taking the five thousand pounds, and she has befooled me as she has so many others."

I did not tell him that I thought he had been rightly served, although it was strongly in my mind to do so.

Presently I said:

"Although you tell me your wife was such a consummate actress, yet it seems almost too incredible for belief that the grief she professed to feel at my illness, and the tears she shed, were other than the expressions of genuine feeling."

"All put on, I assure you. Mimi could cause her tears to flow at will. She made no attempt to conceal from me her hope that you would not recover, because, as she said, she felt nearly sure that either my name, or hers, or both of them, would be found mentioned in your will."

After that I was so shocked and pained

that I had to mix myself an extra jorum of grog before I could find another word to say.

But little more remains to be told. By his own action Phil had made of himself an outcast and a beggar. He had come skulking to my house under cover of darkness, and under cover of darkness he would have to skulk away. But whatever his faults and follies had been, it was impossible that I should let him go away empty-handed. Of the two hundred and fifty pounds paid him by Mr. Dallison, he had given his wife two hundred, and had been living since then on the remainder in an obscure London lodging. He was liable to be arrested at any moment, and his only chance of safety lay in getting out of the country as speedily as possible.

It is scarcely necessary that I should reveal what ultimately became of him. It is enough to say that no message or token ever reached him from the woman who had ruined his life, and made him a lifelong outlaw from his native land.

A SPRING BIRTHDAY.

By HARRIET STOCKALL.

WHAT blossom shall we choose
From spring's bright coronal for thee,
Our one sweet, spring flower? Shall it be
A snowdrop, whiter than the snow;
A crocus-cup, with gold a-glow,
And gemmed with pearly dew?

A violet, darling, blue
As April's clear, unclouded skies,
Blue as thine own fair, happy eyes;
Sweet with a perfume that the spring
Keeps for its early blossoming,
When bud and leaf are new?

A stately daffodil,
That proudly lifts its fearless head
Above the sheltered garden-bed,
And fronts, with courage brave and free,
The March winds blowing stormily,
The cold showers dropping chill?

Ah, love! we need not give
Our flowers as emblems unto thee,
Whom Heaven hath sent our flower to be;
Whom Heaven hath gifted with delight,
To glad our hearts from morn till night,
Through all the days we live.

Thou hast the snowdrop, dear.
Pure, white, and vernal from thine heart
Youth's timid aspirations start;
And lo! thou hast the crocus-gold
Of love, true love, that braves the cold,
And shines with changeless cheer.

Thou hast the violet blue,
The hidden sweetness of a life
Set far apart from worldly strife,
Perfume of kindly words and deeds,
Colour to touch earth's common needs
With Heaven's celestial hue.

Thou hast the daffodil,
Cheery and fearless, brave and strong.
Yes, love! to thee spring's flowers belong:
White soul of snowdrop! Heart of gold!
Dearer than all Heaven's gifts we hold
Our child, our darling still.

THE CRUISE OF THE "SEA-NYPH."

By T. B. SOUTHEE.

AT anchor, just below Gravesend, only a short distance from the Terrace Pier, lay a large schooner yacht, bearing the very appropriate appellation of the "Sea-nymph." She was a beautiful craft, a veritable belle of the sea, and her owner was proud of her. She was a fast and weatherly craft, and well known among yachtsmen as a prize-winner.

It was a splendid afternoon in the latter part of August. The air was soft and balmy, and there was a fresh little breeze from west by south. It was high water—that is, the tide had just commenced to ebb, and the schooner had swung to her anchor, and was lying with her head upstream.

Two gentlemen, one in a nautical costume of plain blue serge, and the other in one which might be said to emulate Joseph's coat in its variety of colours, were lolling on the bulwarks, the latter puffing out great volumes of smoke from a by no means Liliputian pipe, and watching it floating away lazily on the summer air.

"There they are, Jack!" exclaimed the gorgeously attired gentleman, as three young girls and an old gentleman came down the pier steps, and were handed into a commodious and highly varnished gig, which was at once pushed off and rowed towards the schooner.

"I think you're right for once, Bob," replied Jack. "I recognise Maud's tall figure. I don't know much about the other two. Do you?"

"Know the Davenport girls? Yes, rather! The fact is, the elder one, Milly, is rather sweet upon me."

"Now, Bob," said Jack, shaking his head solemnly "if I did not know that you were the greatest liar upon earth, I should have to arrive at the conclusion that the young lady was sadly wanting in taste."

"Ah! that's just like you, Jack; your vanity is egregious," replied Bob.

"No, no, the boat is on the other leg, old man; but here they come," exclaimed Jack, as the boat ranged alongside, and the ladies were being handed up the ladder.

"What a lovely yacht!" exclaimed Maud Brennan, as she took Jack Morton's hand, and was assisted on deck.

"So glad you consented to come," he

said, softly, with one of his pleasant smiles.

There was a slight flush on Maud's cheeks when Mr. Morton relinquished her hand, after retaining it rather longer than was necessary to reach the deck in safety.

"I knew you were at the bottom of this," she whispered.

"No, indeed I was not," he responded, in the same low tone. "It was entirely Frank's suggestion."

Maud Brennan, in the estimation of Jack Morton, and, indeed, in the estimation of most people who had an eye for beauty, was a very lovely creature. She was attired in orthodox yachting costume—blue Oxford jacket with gilt anchor buttons, a skirt of the same coloured serge, and a jaunty little hat of the true nautical type.

Two other girls in the same piquant costume now stepped on deck.

"My cousins," commenced Maud.

"Oh, you need not trouble yourself, Maud, dear," said Milly, the elder of the two. "We have met before. How do you do, Mr. Morton?" and she offered him her hand.

"You never told me that you knew my cousins," said Maud, in a slightly querulous tone.

"Because I did not know that the Miss Davenports were your cousins," he replied, quickly. "And how does Miss Dolly do?" he continued, as that young lady came forward.

"Quite well, thanks," replied Dolly, rather stiffly. She did not want to be Dollyed by other people's sweethearts, so she turned up her pretty nose and passed on.

"And here is Mr. Tyson," cried Milly; "now here's a surprise!"

"I hope it's not an unpleasant one," said Bob, taking her proffered hand.

"No, no," she replied, and there was a tinge on her cheeks and a sparkle in her brown eyes which fully confirmed his words.

By this time Frank Easton, the owner of the yacht, had assisted Mr. Brennan out of the boat, and after a few passing compliments, the whole party went aft. Meantime the crew were busy loosing the sails and weighing the anchors, and in a very short time the schooner, with a fair wind, was plunging her way down the Lower Hope at the rate of ten knots an hour. They were on their way to Norway, a trip which Frank Easton had arranged entirely for the benefit of his friend, Jack Morton. He said nothing to his friend

and not a word to Maud. They were in love. Frank felt sure of that. Jack was diffident and Maud was shy, and he imagined a week or two of close companionship would remedy all this. Thus it was that Frank argued. He had asked the two Miss Davenports to join them, simply that Jack might have a fair field. He had seen very little of these young ladies, and had no idea of the danger he was likely to incur by exposing himself to their fascinations, especially those of little Dolly. His intentions were to look after his yacht, for he was his own sailing-master, and leave his friends to entertain the girls.

This, however, did not accord with the view of Miss Dolly Davenport, and she had not been an hour on board the "Sea-nymph" before all his good resolutions were being put to flight by this pretty and fascinating girl. She asked such funny questions; her remarks were so quaint; her manner so easy and natural that he was half in love with her before he knew where he was.

She made a charming picture as she stood on the quarter-deck, with her little hands thrust into the pockets of her jacket, her hair ruffled, and her naturally delicate colour heightened by the breeze, and her eyes sparkling as she listened to Frank's explanations of things pertaining to the sea.

"Isn't it delightful!" she said, as the vessel, with her sheets eased off and her balloon jib bellying out in a graceful curve, sped lightly over the water; "it's the easiest and most pleasant mode of progression I know of."

"It's not all sunshine on the ocean," replied Frank. "It's beautiful now; but there are such things as rough seas and stormy skies."

"Oh, but that would be lovely! Do you think we shall see anything of them this cruise? I should so love to see a storm at sea," she exclaimed.

"I should hope not!" he replied, looking up softly into her face, and smiling at her girlish enthusiasm. "If you had a taste of one, I don't think you would want to try a second."

"You think I should be afraid," she said, meditatively. "Well, I don't know; it's a feeling I have never experienced, so the experiment would be a novel one, and I should like to try it."

"Were you never frightened?" he asked.

"Not that I can remember."

At this moment the steward announced

that tea was served, and they all descended to the saloon. The cabin of the "Sea-nymph" was a picture of luxurious neatness, and all the arrangements for the meal were as *recherché*, as the cabin was elegant.

It was a superb night. The sky was clear and bright; the moonlight was sleeping in dreamlike splendour on the waters. All was still and silent in the sky and upon the ocean. The wind had gone down with the sun, and the only sound that occasionally broke the stillness was the soft murmuring rill of the water as the vessel passed through it, which seemed to say, "Hush!" as though Nature feared that any louder sound should interrupt her calm repose.

It was a pleasant and picturesque group that sat on the deck of the "Sea-nymph" and gazed at this beautiful picture.

The most prominent figure in it was that of Robert Tyson. Not because his physical proportions were greater, or his physiognomic beauty superior to his sex, but simply because his costume, if not more attractive, was more noticeable.

His great hobby was swimming, and he was continually vaunting his proficiency in the art of natation. Not that he had ever achieved anything remarkable in that line, but he was deeply impressed with the notion that he could if he tried.

"It is not likely," he was saying, "that I should make an exhibition of myself; but if I was cast away, say in the Indian Ocean, or the Pacific, you'd be sure to hear of me landing in the nearest group of islands I came to."

"No doubt, no doubt," said Mr. Brennan, who had a quiet vein of humour in him; "that is, provided you could carry enough provisions for the journey."

"That's just the point," replied Bob. "It isn't the swimming, it's the grub that's the difficulty."

Dolly laughed a ringing, mocking laugh.

"Now, that is too bad, Mr. Tyson; you've taken all the romance out of your story. I was just concocting a beautiful idyl of a shipwrecked mariner, swimming on shore in an exhausted state, and fainting as soon as he reached a palm grove in the vicinity of the shore. When returning consciousness came, there was a beautiful Indian maiden bending over him, like Haidee over Don Juan; and you upset it all by saying, 'it's the grub that's the difficulty!' Grub! What an unphiloso-

phical mode of speaking of nutriment; the man who invented it ought to be hanged."

"How do you know it was a man?" asked Frank.

"Because, sir," replied Dolly, with dignity, "a woman would never have thought of doing anything so silly."

"Oh, come, come; that will not do, Miss Dolly," exclaimed Tyson. "It's not fair to apportion all the silliness to the masculine portion of humanity."

"I think it's time we all turned in," said Mr. Brennan, who thought the conversation was taking a disagreeable turn. "Come, girls, do you know what time it is?" he continued, taking out his watch. "Twelve o'clock, I do declare!" And throwing away the end of his cigar, he rose, and disappeared down the companion, followed by the others.

Two sunny days and starlit nights had passed since the "Sea-nymph" left the Thames. Never had the sea smiled more seductively than it did on the morning of the third day as Frank Easton and Dolly Davenport sat in their wicker chairs, gazing out on the broad expanse of ocean, whose sapphire-coloured waves were sparkling in the sunlight.

It was like a dream, Dolly said, so tranquil were the sea and the sky, and so still was everything.

Milly had ceased to chide her sister, for she was too much occupied with her new lover, Bob Tyson.

Old Mr. Brennan had been complaining of his corns, and was prophesying a change in the weather. "After a calm comes a storm," he said.

"Let it come!" exclaimed Bob Tyson, valiantly; "I'm not afraid! There's no possible danger in a yacht of this size, even if we should fall in with a squall."

"I hope we shall!" exclaimed Dolly. "That would be grand!"

"I don't care much about storms at sea," said Maud, "they are generally so wet! But, papa, dear," she went on, "you don't really think we are going to have a storm, do you?"

"I can't tell, child," replied the old gentleman, "I only know that my corns have been shooting abominably, and that, with me, always portends bad weather."

"I don't believe in weather prognostics," remarked Bob Tyson. "I always take them like dreams, by contraries."

"Long foretold, long last; short notice,

down fast," quoted Jack Morton. "What do you say to that, Bob?"

"Say! why, that I've seen the mercury rising when it has been blowing a gale of wind!"

"Yes, but that was because it had previously fallen," replied Jack.

"But is the glass going down now?" asked Milly, tremulously.

"Yes, it has gone down three-tenths since breakfast," answered Frank.

Milly looked scared.

"Don't be frightened," whispered Mr. Tyson. "It's all right! I'll take care of you. I'm an old sailor, you know!"

Milly gave him a glance of thankfulness, and the conversation passed to another subject.

As the day progressed, the heavens became more threatening. The sky in the east was black and lowering. There was very little wind, and what there was came in fitful puffs. Shortly after four o'clock the rain commenced to descend in torrents. This lasted only a short time, and it then cleared off. The bank in the east broke away, the sky was bright, the sun shone, and a nice working breeze sprang up from the north-east.

"It's all over," laughed Bob, "I thought you were making a great fuss about nothing."

"Not so fast, my dear fellow," answered Frank, "that's only the prelude; the play is to come."

"We shall see!" remarked Mr. Tyson, oracularly.

For more than an hour it seemed as though he were right; the breeze held, and the yacht flew rapidly through the water. Then it fell, and the sea was stark calm, the atmosphere was unusually oppressive. The silence was strangely impressive, the smallest sound being distinctly audible, while the men's voices on the fore-castle, though remarkably distinct, had a hollow, far-off ring in them.

Dolly had never been gayer, brighter, or more amusing; but Maud and Milly were very silent, and in their hearts wished they had never been tempted to trust themselves to the treacherous ocean.

The sunset was wild and portentous. The great orb as it sank towards the sea assumed a deep blood-red hue, and when it disappeared beneath the horizon, it still sent, as it were, broad streaks of fire across the pale blue sky.

Then, gradually, dense darkness over-

spread the heavens, and in the distance there were hoarse mutterings of thunder.

"Now what do you say, Mr. Tyson?" asked Dolly.

Before he could reply, the sky was illuminated by a blaze of the most vivid lightning, which was followed by a peal of thunder that sounded like the crack of doom.

Bob Tyson turned as pale as death, exclaiming: "Good God! What is it!" Then, turning suddenly, he made an abrupt dive, and, disappearing down the companion, made for his berth.

No one had time to notice this, for at the same time a heavy squall of wind struck the yacht and caused her to reel and stagger for an instant, and then heel over till she was almost on her beam-ends. Then she recovered herself and flew off at the top of her speed.

Dolly stood mute and awestricken, clinging to one of the after backstays.

"You had better go below, my dear young lady," said Frank; "this is no place for you; it will rain directly, and you will get soaked."

"Oh, no, no; let me stop where I am," she said; and then, after a pause, "I suppose it is very dreadful to say so, but I'm delighted. Isn't it grand?"

"Yes," he replied, "it is grand, but it is dangerous, and I advise you to go below," and she obeyed.

The sky was now one black pall, through which an occasional flash of lightning worked out like a tongue of flame, followed by peals of deep-voiced thunder, which echoed and re-echoed across the firmament in profoundest diapason.

All the winds of heaven seemed to be engaged in a wild warfare, sweeping before them the poor "Sea-nymph," which, with loose-reefed foresail and mainsail and torn jib, was flying over the hissing and coming sea, as if defying the storm.

Presently, as Frank and the mate stood watching the storm, the look-out forward sang out: "Breakers ahead!"

"Breakers!" echoed the mate, as he hurried forward. "The fellow must be mad! There are no rocks or sands within a hundred miles of us."

"There! There!" continued the man, pointing forward, "right ahead!"

"Breakers! Those are not breakers," exclaimed the mate, "it's a waterspout! Luff! luff!"

But it was too late; the next instant an avalanche of water descended on the

devoted craft. There was a noise as of the tearing and rending of spars, mingled with half-despairing human cries, and the next instant the "Sea-nymph" was lying a helpless wreck on the water.

It was past four o'clock, and the morning was dawning grayly. There were clouds in the sky, but the gale was dying out, sobbing sullenly like a child after a violent fit of passion, and the sea was falling. In the east all was clear, the morning star was slowly rising, and was already several degrees above the horizon, against which the heaving billows as they rose and fell cut out darkly. Then came the red glow of the advancing sun, tinging the sky and every shred of cloud with a crimson glow.

When at last daylight dawned on that sullen sea, it showed the poor "Sea-nymph" wrecked, and dismantled, but still afloat, rolling heavily on the long ground swells. Of her crew only a portion remained; the mate, and four of the watch on deck, had been swept into eternity by that avalanche of water which had fallen on her deck.

When the catastrophe happened, Dolly Davenport was in the act of stepping into her berth. For a moment she stood paralysed. The noise of the falling avalanche was terrific, and it almost stunned her. Then there came a rush down the companion, and she found herself up to her knees in water.

"What is it! What has happened?" was asked on all sides.

Dolly hastily threw on a dressing-gown and returned to the saloon. Here she encountered Robert Tyson, who with blanched cheeks and staring eyes was frantically calling for "Help!"

"Good heavens!" he shrieked, "we shall all be drowned! Help! help! Frank! Frank! Where are you? Save me, save me! Oh, why did I ever come on this cursed voyage? Why did I trust myself on this treacherous sea?" And he sank on his knees with a shrill cry of agony, but sprang up again suddenly on finding himself immersed in water.

By this time the rest of the party had gathered in the saloon, and were gazing, panic-stricken, into each other's faces. It was a time to test the courage of a man; but Dolly's did not fail her even at this critical moment.

She stood quite still. She felt that in all probability the vessel was sinking,

and, sending up a prayer to heaven for help and succour, she stood calmly waiting her doom.

At this moment there came the sound of voices, and then the clanking of the pumps. These infused hopes into her heart, and her thoughts at once flew to Frank—where was he?

Jack Morton was making for the deck, and she followed him. It was pitch dark when they reached it; but a moment afterwards a rift in the clouds threw a gleam of moonlight on the scene, and they saw a group of dark figures on the main deck, but there was not light enough to distinguish them individually.

"Do you see him?" asked Dolly.

"See who?"

"Mr. Easton!"

"No, but I will soon ascertain if he is all right!"

He was passing forward, when he stumbled on a prostrate form. He stooped down and raised it, and, as he did so, another gleam of moonlight passed over the wreck, and a cry of horror escaped from Dolly's lips as she recognised the ghastly features of her lover.

"Is he hurt—is he dead?" she gasped.

"No," answered Jack, after he had felt his pulse. "Thank Heaven! There's life in the old boy yet!"

Dolly made no sign, but her heart gave a great bound, and a prayer of thankfulness went up to heaven as she assisted Morton to carry him to the companion. Never before had her heart been filled with such grief and terror. To see this handsome and good-hearted young fellow whom she loved, and who she knew also loved her, lying white and unconscious on one of the sofas in the cabin, gave her a shock such as she had never before experienced.

Restoratives were administered, and it was some time before Frank recovered consciousness. By this time the steward had opened a trap hatch in the floor. The water had run off into the hold, and things had been restored to something like order.

"I know nothing," he said, in answer to their enquiries, "except that there was a cry of 'breakers,' and the mate called to the helm man to 'luff!' The next moment I received a blow on my head, and all was dark."

"It was a waterspout," suggested Mr. Brennan. "And I fancy we may be very thankful things are no worse. I have read that when one falls on a

ship, it usually occasions its instant destruction."

There was a pause for a moment, and then Jack said: "Well, as you seem better, old boy, I'll go on deck again and see how the land lies."

The aspect of things there was anything but encouraging. The vessel was dismantled, the bulwarks had been mostly carried away, and the boats had been smashed. It was a bad look-out, and their only chance was that they might be rescued by a passing vessel.

Jack Morton went forward.

"Can't you gentlemen give us a spell at the pumps?" asked the second mate. "If not, we shall be done up soon, though my chaps won't give in while they have got a jog in 'em. There's no mistake about it, sir, it's for dear life."

Jack saw the wisdom of this course, and went aft and had a whispered colloquy with Frank.

"Yes, certainly," he replied; "you go and turn out that lazy beggar Tyson, while I go on deck and see about it. Will you come too, Mr. Brennan?" Then, as they passed the pantry, he continued, "Steward, give the men a glass of grog and a biscuit!"

So the time passed. A signal of distress had been hoisted on a spar lashed to the stump of the main-mast, and as soon as the morning mist had cleared away, a sharp look-out had been kept for any sail that might heave in sight; but though the sea and the horizon had been swept repeatedly with the glass, not a sign of anything but sea and sky could be seen.

Everything had now been done that could be to discover and stop the leak; but all had failed, the only alternative left was to fother a sail, and in that way stop it; but that, too, had failed, for an hour afterwards when the pumps had been sounded, instead of any diminution, there was still a decided increase. It was then that the utter hopelessness of their position began to dawn on the whole party, and blank dismay was written on every countenance. Even the sailors lost heart. "If the end must come," they said, "it might as well come sooner as later."

"What is the matter?" asked Dolly, who was standing by Frank's side; "what have they left off pumping for?"

"Because, they say, it is useless."

"But you are not going to give in, are you?" flashed Dolly.

"No," he replied, and whispered, "not

while there's a chance of saving you, my darling!" Then, turning to Morton, he said: "Come on, Jack, we'll take the starboard pump, let who will take the other."

No sooner were the words uttered than Dolly passed aft, and was speaking to Maud.

"It's life or death, dear," she was saying, "we can but try!" and the next instant they had seized the other pump brake and were working away manfully, one, two, three, and a pause, as if they had all their lives been used to the work.

But the men could not stand by and see two young ladies doing their work, and they sprang forward, one of them saying: "Avast there, ladies, we can't stand this."

But Dolly gave an indignant refusal.

"No, no!" she cried, "when we're tired you can take your spell," and she and Maud continued to ply the brake vigorously.

"Mr. Easton!" called out Maud, as she and Dolly sat panting after their exertion, "what is that in the distance? There!" she continued, pointing with her fingers.

"That," continued Frank, after a pause, "that is the smoke of a steamer!"

In a moment all was excitement. Hope, that "lingers long and latest dies," once more revived in their breasts, and the men set to work at the pumps with an ardour and perseverance which formed a thrilling contrast to their recent torpor and dejection.

Half an hour had been spent in all the agony of suspense. The smoke, which at first was only faintly descried on the horizon, came nearer and nearer, and then the dark hull of a large vessel was plainly discernible.

"Best fire a gun, sir," said one of the men, "or he'll not see us else."

"Yes, Coats, you are quite right. If we don't attract their attention, they won't come within miles of us."

Boom! went the signal gun of distress. Boom! boom! again, but the steamer held on her course. She was only about five miles distant; but, unfortunately, the wind was in her favour, and consequently the sound was carried away from instead of towards her.

Gun after gun had been fired, and now the steamer was abreast of the yacht, and no notice had been taken of their signals, and from a delirium of joy and expectation they fell into a profound dependency. Still the men continued to work vigorously

at the pumps; but, notwithstanding their efforts, gradually, little by little water increased. When the pumps sounded, it was found that there were inches more than there were two hours previous, and the vessel was getting so on the water that both the fore and channels were almost awash with sea.

Frank and the mate had calculated the vessel might, if nothing happened, four-and-twenty hours; and there had a consultation as to what had best be done. Jack Morton had suggested that only chance was to make a raft. But to suggest such an idea and to find materials for its construction were different things. Without spars, a raft was an impossibility, and most of the spar "Sea-nymph" possessed broke adrift the storm.

In the midst of this, there came a shout from the fore-castle: "I've found it, I've found it!" and one of the men was rushing aft in a state of great excitement.

"Found what?" asked Easton.

"The leak, sir! The leak! It's in the bows, just under the bilge streaks; now that we have found it, we'll soon stop it."

"Thank Heaven! Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Frank, and he ran off to the fore-castle to communicate the intelligence.

Inspired by this cheering news, the men forgot their fatigue, and laboured more strenuously at the pumps, and in more than an hour a loud cheer announced that the pumps sucked, and that the danger of foundering, which had menaced them for so many hours, was at an end.

Under such circumstances people do strange things—things they would never have thought of doing under ordinary conditions. So it came to pass that Dolly and Frank Easton came aft and explained the cause of the men's cheering. Dorcas Davenport, in her joy and excitement, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him; and poor old Mr. Brennan, in exuberance of his gladness, not only shed tears, but also seized Mr. Tyson's hand and shook it cordially.

It must not be thought that Dolly was acting an unmaidenly part, or that in giving him this brief embrace, so full of love and tenderness, she was transgressing against the proprieties, because they were in truth betrothed lovers. In the darkness and dangers of the past, and Frank had entered into a little

pact, and had vowed to love and cherish each other to their lives' end.

The fine weather which had set in after the storm had now lasted three days, and during this time a great deal of work had been done, and the "Sea-nymph," though she did not present a very rakish or attractive appearance, was at least under canvas, and was slowly making for the English coast. Fortunately, the wind was fair, and they were expecting every minute to sight the great promontory of Flamborough Head.

Dolly Davenport and Frank were seated hand in hand on the taffrail, talking in low tones, now and again relapsing into silence—a sweet, eloquent silence; a silence which spoke of a trustful though unexpressed sympathy and unalloyed happiness. They had been talking of the peril they had just passed through, and of their happy deliverance; and it all appeared like a hideous dream from which they had just awakened.

Occasionally they heard voices from the cabin where Jack Morton was devoting himself to Maud Brennan, who, to his intense satisfaction, was gazing fondly into his clear, honest eyes. They, too, were happy, for though no words had been spoken, their hearts were full of joy and love.

As to Bob, he had felt that since his escapade in the storm he had lost caste with his friends in the cabin, and was trying, and not without some success, to make new ones among the hands forward, where he was smoking his large pipe and narrating his wonderful exploits in the nautical art to an attentive audience.

Milly and her uncle were amusing themselves with a game of chess, for she, too, had given Mr. Tyson the cold shoulder, having determined that, notwithstanding his wealth and position, she could not marry a coward.

"There's the Flamborough Head light, sir," said the man at the helm, "just visible on the starboard bow."

"All right, Jackson; keep her as she is," answered Frank. "If we get close in with the land we may fall in with a steamer or a tug."

"Listen!" cried Dolly.

"What is it, dearest?" asked Frank.

"The thud of paddle-wheels," she replied. The vessel—the noise of whose paddle-wheels had attracted Dolly's attention—proved to be a Scotch steamer,

bound for the Thames, and having been hailed by Frank Easton, her captain agreed, for a fairly good remuneration, to take the wreck of the yacht in tow, and she was soon safely at her old anchorage off the Terrace Pier, and thus ended the cruise of the "Sea-nymph."

Of course, full and particular accounts of this perilous cruise appeared in the daily newspapers, and became a topic of conversation at the clubs, and a gentleman who was well aware of Mr. Tyson's idiosyncrasy, accosted him, with a view to draw him out.

"Aw, yes, I was on board," and then followed a long account of the accident, and then he went on to remark: "I'm not in the habit of boasting—such a thing is quite out of my line. But," he went on with bland dignity, "the affair might have had a very different termination if I had not been on board. The situation, I admit, was a perilous one, and I am not surprised that some of those on board lost their heads. But, fortunately, Bob Tyson is no coward, and instead of sitting down with his hands before him, or being seized with panic, he encouraged the sailors, most of whom were half frantic with terror, and setting them an example, manned the pumps, and succeeded in keeping the vessel afloat till the leak was stopped."

"Bravo! bravo! Very good of you indeed, Mr. Tyson," exclaimed a voice behind him, and on turning round he found himself face to face with Richard Davenport, who was standing convulsed with suppressed laughter. "Excuse my laughing, my dear fellow," he said, "but your account and that of my sister Milly differ materially—she says the boot was on the other leg, and that it was you who lost your head."

Tyson was completely taken aback; he flushed crimson, and began stammering out a lame sort of apology; but, as Mr. Davenport followed this up by giving a vivid description of the scene in the cabin during the storm, the laughter and chaff became more than he could bear, and forced him to make a most precipitate retreat.

In conclusion it must be stated that Frank Easton's plan for the furtherance of the happiness of his friend Jack Morton answered exceedingly well. Like Frank and Dolly, the peril and danger through which they had passed had only drawn them much more closely together.

PIET'S BARGAIN.

BY M. K. BOUSFIELD.

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etc., etc.*

CHAPTER I.

ONCE upon a time—more than seven years ago now—I, Molly Mackenzie, was standing by our garden gate looking out across the veldt for my brother Jesse, who had ridden off, early that morning, to a sheep-farm some miles away. Sundown was approaching, and I, with the help of Bridget, our old servant, had already prepared the supper and spread the table in the verandah, and now I was standing by the gate looking out for Jesse. By-and-by I saw him coming, and saw also that he had a stranger with him.

Holmwood, as Jesse had called our house—after the old house in England—was a very lonely place, ten miles from any other station, and twenty from a town; but I never felt it dull. Jesse and I were very happy together, and we often had visitors—passing strangers, in need of a supper and a bed, always found both at Holmwood.

Jesse introduced this stranger to me as a Doctor Despard, and I felt at once, as he took off his hat and bowed to me, that he was different from most of our visitors. He was not particularly handsome, but there was an air of distinction about him, and his voice was so low and pleasant that I felt favourably impressed at once; and so, while Jesse took him to his bedroom, I went into the kitchen, and prepared some extra dainty dish for supper, and arranged some fresh flowers in the vases that stood on the supper-table.

I had never troubled to do so before for any visitor; not even when Piet de Beer—the rich Boer at whom all the girls in the country-side were supposed to be setting their caps—rode over to see us, which he did more frequently than I quite approved of; but I did not wish this stranger to consider us quite beyond the pale of civilisation.

That was an evening never to be forgotten! A kind of landmark in my life. I did not talk very much, but I sat by Jesse's side and listened to the men's talk, and watched the Southern Cross shining in a deep-blue sky, and the fireflies flashing in and out of the verandah. A happy, blessed evening, the forerunner of still happier days to come!

Three weeks passed. Christmas was close at hand, and still Martin Despard remained with us at Holmwood. Both Jesse and I were so pleased with him that, whenever he spoke of leaving us, we always found some good reason why he should stay a little longer. He was very frank and communicative, and at a very early stage of our friendship he had spoken to me of his home and people, and even read me some of his sister's letters, till I soon grew to feel as if I had a personal acquaintance with both sister and mother, and with the genial old bachelor uncle, with whom they lived and whose heir Martin Despard was.

"Just after I had taken my M.D., I had a sharp attack of typhoid fever," so he told me that same afternoon, "and as my doctor recommended a sea voyage, I came first to the Cape, and afterwards to Durban, and then, as my health was completely re-established, I determined to run up to the Gold Fields, and try if I couldn't make a fortune there."

"I hope you may make it," I retorted; "but the accounts are not very favourable just now. I only know one man who has done any good there, and he is one of those favoured mortals who seem to succeed in everything they attempt. Jesse says that everything Piet de Beer touches turns to gold! He has, certainly, been wonderfully lucky, both at Kimberley and the Fields."

"Is he a friend of yours?" Martin asked.

"Yes; at least, we have known him all our lives," I answered. "He has a large farm about twelve miles from here, and he often rides over. He has been in town lately, or you would have seen him before now."

"What is he like? Old or young; handsome or ugly?"

I smiled demurely, and glanced at him over the great leaf which I was waving to and fro before my face, and using as a fan.

"He is Jesse's age," I said, "twenty-nine. And he is just the very handsomest man I ever saw in my life. He is very tall and finely made; his features are perfect; and his beard is the envy of all the men in the neighbourhood! It is long, and silky, and dark, and his eyes are darker still, and wonderfully bright and expressive. Indeed, he is, as I said before, the very handsomest man I ever saw."

"But you don't like him!"

Martin laughed gaily; his frown vanished, and he leant forward and looked up merrily into my face.

"No, you need not deny it," he said, imperiously; "you don't like him, in spite of his good looks and his riches! Well," he drew a long breath, "I was just on the point of envying him, a minute ago; I don't now. I wouldn't change places with him for the whole universe, just on that account; because, in spite of all his gifts and graces, he has failed to win your liking."

"Oh, I like him well enough," I said. "I have known him all my life; and he was very kind and helpful to us last year, during the war. If it had not been for him, I dare say our house might have shared the fate of several others we heard of, and have been burnt over our heads. As it was, we were not molested in the least, and Jesse always declares our safety was due to Piet's influence."

"He is a Boer, then?"

"Yes, a Boer of the Boers! He hates the English with all his heart; and, indeed, he has cause to do so," I answered, gravely.

"Why?" Martin asked, curiously.

"His mother was a very beautiful woman, and he was passionately attached to her, and she left her husband and home with an Englishman, who had been their guest. Piet was a boy of fifteen then; old enough to understand and smart under the disgrace she had brought upon them, and he has hated the English, and everything English, since."

"He seems an amiable character," Martin said, drily; "I don't wonder you don't like him."

"Oh, but that is not the reason," I said, quickly. "We used to be great friends, once, when I was a child; but, lately, I—for some silly reason or other—have taken a dislike to him," I faltered, and then, moved by a sudden impulse, I put my hand on his arm, and I made a confession to him which I had never breathed to any one before. "I believe I am a little afraid of him sometimes," I said, nervously.

"Afraid! Nonsense! Why should you be afraid of him?" Martin cried.

I hesitated.

"He—likes me, you know," I said; "and when he asked me to marry him, and I said it was quite impossible, he only laughed and looked at me oddly, and said:

"So you think now, my heart; but I will make the impossible the possible, some day."

"And, indeed, sometimes I am almost afraid he will," I whispered. "Bridget says he has the evil eye, and she always crosses herself when he looks at her, for protection. Ah, you are laughing at me."

I coloured, and would have drawn my hand hastily away; but he was holding it now on his arm, and his clasp tightened as he spoke. The amused smile, which my last words had called up in his eyes, vanished, and there came there instead a look so full of infinite protecting love and tenderness that, again, my heart beat tumultuously, and the happy blushes dyed my cheeks again.

"Nay; that he never shall," he said, "if only you will give me the right to protect you against him—against all the world. Will you, darling Molly? See, I have loved you since the first day we met, and I have gone on loving you more and more every day and every hour since then."

And then, as I was still silent—for, indeed, my head and heart were throbbing so wildly, and every nerve in my body was quivering with the delight and surprise which his sudden declaration of love had brought to me, that I could not speak—he bent his head and covered my hand with kisses.

"Say something kind to me, Molly. Tell me that you love me just a little," he whispered.

I laughed nervously.

"A little! Well, perhaps, I do—just a little," I said.

"No; not a little. I will not be content with that; with nothing less than your whole heart," my masterful lover cried. "It is mine, is it not, Molly?"

"Oh, you know it is," I cried; and then I started and coloured violently, and snatched my hand from his, for, just at that moment, there came the sound of horse's feet, and Piet de Beer rode up to the gate.

I saw him first, and I knew that his bright eyes had noticed my sudden movement and flushed cheeks; for there swept over his face a look of such mingled rage and disappointment that banished its beauty at once, and made it hideous and loathsome in my sight.

It passed in a minute, and I went forward, and—for why should I fear him

now, I, who had my gallant English lover for a protector?—gave him the welcome I was far from feeling.

"What a stranger you are! Jesse will be so glad to see you," I said.

"A stranger! Yes, I have been in town for nearly three weeks. I couldn't get away before," he answered.

He glanced at Martin Despard. I introduced the two men, and, after a rather constrained conversation, I slipped away to order some refreshment for our unwelcome guest, and left him alone with Martin. Jesse came in presently. Piet de Beer was a favourite with him; they always got on well together, and, indeed, he had been a good neighbour to us; and I should have liked him well if—if he had been content with liking. But, as he was not, and as I could never—not even if I had never known Martin Despard—have given him the love he asked, I felt a little afraid and distrustful of him.

"Take care on him, honey," Bridget had once said solemnly to me; "he's a bad 'un, if iver there were one, and he'll stick at nothin' to gain his own ends."

I felt convinced that Bridget was right, and I grew more and more sure of it as the evening went on, and I saw the fierce, furtive glances which every now and then he cast from me to Martin; and noticed, too, how eagerly he listened when we spoke to each other.

I don't think either of the others noticed it; for he was apparently in the highest spirits, professed himself delighted to make Martin's acquaintance, and amused us all with his descriptions of some queer people he had met in town; but, in spite of all this, I distrusted him more and more as the evening went on.

It happened that, just before he left, he and I were alone together for a few minutes. Martin had gone into the house, and Jesse went to speak to one of the men, and left us alone in the verandah. We talked a few minutes on indifferent subjects, then he said, suddenly:

"Molly, is this news that I hear true?"

"What news?" I said.

"What news? Oh, you know," he said. "Is it true that you have thrown me over for this cursed Englishman? It can't be, Molly! Oh, say it is not true, darling! Why, I have loved you all my life!" he cried.

His fierce tone changed to one of passionate entreaty; and he took my hand and

held it in his hot, trembling fingers. I think I liked him better at that moment than I had ever done before; for I was sorry for him, and, as every one knows, pity is akin to love. So, as I could not give him the denial he asked, I was silent for a moment.

"Yes, it is true," I said, at last.

The moonlight was falling full upon his face, and as I said the words I glanced up at him, and was startled to see how white and rigid it had grown, and with what a red, angry light his eyes were flaming. They looked like danger-signals, I thought; and there was danger also in his voice, as he answered in a low, deliberate tone, full of suppressed rage and passion:

"I told you once, nearly a year ago, that I would not give you up; that you should be no man's wife but mine. I tell you it again now! What, do you think that I, who have loved you for years, will allow this Englishman, who was a perfect stranger to you only a few weeks ago, to come between me and my heart's desire—to win from me the only girl I ever loved, or wanted for my wife? I tell you no—a thousand times no! My wife you shall be, or, if not mine, no other man's!"

"You forget! It takes two to make a bargain, Mr. de Beer. I say to you now what I said nearly a year ago, when you did me the honour of asking me to marry you—I do not love you, and I will not be your wife."

"And I say you will do both some day!"

I set my teeth firmly.

"I won't!" I said. "I hate you now! I would rather die than marry you."

He laughed oddly. In spite of my resistance, he drew me closer to him, so close, that I could feel his hot breath on my cheek; so close, that his eyes seemed to look straight down into mine.

"Perhaps it might come to that some day," he said. "Perhaps you may have to choose between death and me! Don't you think that I would make the more acceptable bridegroom of the two, Molly?"

"No, I don't," I said, stoutly.

His tight clasp relaxed as I spoke, and he dropped my hand, and fell back a few paces, as Jesse and Martin appeared at the further end of the verandah.

"I don't want to hurry you, Piet, but your horse is ready; and you will scarcely reach home before the moon sets if you don't start at once," Jesse said, in his cheery voice.

"I will go now. Good night, Molly."

"Good night," I answered, civilly; but I absolutely declined to see his offered hand, and the black look came over his face again, as he said a hasty good-night to Martin, and left the verandah.

"Come to the gate, Molly, and speed the parting guest," Martin said, gaily.

He put his hand through my arm and led me out of the verandah into the moonlit, fragrant garden. A Kafir boy was holding De Beer's horse at the gate; it was a beautiful creature, one of the strongest and swiftest horses in the colony; and, in spite of my anger, I could not help admiring both horse and rider as they stood at the gate in the moonlight.

"He is a splendid fellow, Molly! What bad taste you must have to prefer me to him!" Martin whispered.

I laughed feverishly.

"Yes, it is odd, but it is true all the same," I answered; and then, out of pure recklessness and bravado, I put my hand through his arm and drew closer to him.

De Beer was looking at me, and there came such an evil expression over his face, that involuntarily I shuddered, and drew still closer to Martin.

He looked down at me tenderly.

"What is it, sweetheart! Are you cold, or frightened! You look both," he said, anxiously.

And at his tender tone the colour came back to my cheeks, and the courage to my heart, and I laughed gaily.

"I shall never be frightened again now—now, when I have you to protect me. How could I!" I said.

CHAPTER II.

I DID not tell either Jesse or Martin of my stormy interview with Piet de Beer. I knew Jesse would feel hurt and annoyed, for he liked Piet well; and as Martin was naturally of a somewhat fiery temperament, I was afraid that he would express his opinion too plainly to Piet when next they met. So, as a quarrel between the two men was the last thing I desired, I determined to keep silence.

I was glad I had done so when, next day, Piet rode over to apologise for what he called his unpardonable conduct. He asked my forgiveness so humbly that I could not help promising to forget and forgive; but though I promised, and tried to be as pleasant and gracious to him as usual, I did not quite believe either in his

humility or in the liking and admiration which he professed to feel for Martin. Martin was anxious for our wedding to take place at once, or, at all events, not later than February or March; and though at first I laughed and declared the idea to be absurd and impossible, I gradually grew to think it quite possible, especially as just then, Jesse, who had always had a kind of contempt for girls and matrimony, fell suddenly over head and ears in love with a pretty Durban girl, who was on a visit to one of our neighbours.

She was just the kind of girl to suit him, and to make him a good wife, pretty, and bright, and capable; and I was delighted when Jesse told me that she had accepted him. The thought of leaving Jesse alone at Holmwood was the one bitter drop in my cup of bliss; and now that it was removed, I was perfectly happy.

Christmas came, and passed, and January, which is always a hot month, and was unusually hot that year, passed also. The two weddings were to be celebrated on the same day; and one morning in February, Jesse and Martin rode into town to make the necessary arrangements. Bridget was also from home. She had some relations in Maritzburg, and, a few days before had gone to pay them a visit; so, except for the two Kafirs, I was alone in the house.

Jesse and Martin had started at sunrise, in order to escape the midday heat. I rose early, also, and gave them their breakfasts, and stood at the gate and waved my hand gaily as they rode away, Martin looking back every now and then until he and his horse became a mere speck in the distance. Then I went indoors, and got out my sewing-machine, intending to have a long, uninterrupted day at my work; but, as the morning advanced, the heat became so stifling that I felt too overpowered to go on, so I took a book and went out into the verandah, and, after reading a few pages, went to sleep in my chair.

How long I slept I do not know; but when at last I awoke, the brightness of the day had vanished. There was a close, stifling smell of smoke and burning vegetation, and Dan, my big dog, was standing by my side, with his great paws resting on my knee, looking anxiously up with his great brown eyes into my face. I think it was the touch of his paw on my arm that had awakened me. I patted his head

and spoke to him lazily, and he whimpered and licked my hand, and, finding that I did not rise from my chair, he took hold of my dress and pulled it gently, as was his custom when he wanted me to go anywhere with him.

"What do you want, old boy? It is too hot to go into the garden," I said, lazily. But I humoured him, and rose and went out of the verandah into the garden.

One side of it was sheltered by a thick row of trees; from the other, the great veldt, here and there broken by clumps of camel-thorns or low bushes, stretched away for miles, all brown and parched now with the heat.

I paused by the low fence, and shading my eyes with my hand, I looked curiously at a dense cloud of what seemed like smoke, that came rolling along the veldt, driven before the wind. For a moment I idly wondered what it could be, and then a chill terror swept over me, and I stood rooted to the ground, unable to move or speak. For I knew then what the stifling heat, the smell of smoke, and the odd, suffocating feeling that was in the air, all meant. The veldt was on fire!

Just for one instant I stood and watched the dense cloud that came rolling nearer every moment, then, as Dan gave a piteous whimper, and thrust his nose into my hand, the courage and strength which the sudden terror had momentarily paralysed returned.

"Come, Dan, we have no time to lose," I said; and I ran back into the house to warn the Kafir boys of the impending danger.

No one was there. I looked in vain into the kitchen, then ran out into the yard and opened the stable door, where I expected to find my mare, fleet-footed Bonnibelle, on whom my only hope of escape from a horrible death rested. I opened the door, and called to her; there was no response. I looked again; her stall was empty. She was gone! The Kafirs had taken her, and so cut off my only means of escape!

As I leant, sick, and faint, and trembling, against the door, I heard the welcome sound of horse's feet thundering over the veldt. I started, and looked up, and saw, to my intense relief, Piet de Beer approaching on his great black horse. The sight renewed my courage. I flew to meet him as he drew rein before the gate, and sprang from his saddle.

"Oh, Piet, how good of you! You have come to save me," I cried, and I held out my trembling hands eagerly to him.

"Yes, I have come to save you," he repeated. "I was at ——"—he named a farm a few miles away—"and I heard the veldt was on fire. I fancied you might be in danger, so I rode back at once."

"Oh, how good of you!" I repeated. "I am all alone, Piet. Jesse and Martin are in town, and those cowardly Kafirs have ridden away on Bonnibelle, and left me to die. But now it is all right; you will save me."

"Yes, I can save you," he said in a low, hoarse voice; "but first of all I must know whom I am saving, and whether it is Martin Despard's wife—or mine!"

He looked so pitiless; there was such a cruel determination in his handsome face, that my heart gave a great throb of terror. I tried to smile.

"What nonsense, Piet! Come, don't let us waste any time," and I looked fearfully behind me. "The wind is rising; the smoke coming nearer. Let us go at once."

I tried to pull him towards the horse; but I might as well have tried to lift the horse with one little finger as to move him an inch from the gate against which he was leaning. He laughed.

"Not till you answer my question, Molly. You must choose now, once and for all, between us: between that Englishman, who is false and treacherous, like all his race, who will tire of you before a year is over, and the man who has loved you for years, who would die himself, or"—he paused a moment and looked at me steadily—"see you die rather than save you for another man, and that man an Englishman!"

The blood rushed back to my heart, leaving me deadly faint and trembling; but, with a strong effort, I forced myself to speak.

"This is scarcely a time for jesting, Piet! Let us get beyond the reach of danger, and then you may jest as much as you like. Come."

Again I tried to pull him from the gate, and to pass him. Again I failed. The mocking smile came round his lips, as he saw my useless attempt and the frantic, longing glances I cast towards the horse.

"It is no jest. Am I likely to jest at such a moment!" he said, in his cold, deliberate voice. "You must choose now, once and for all, between us. I can and

will save you if you will swear to give up Martin Despard, and become my wife at once. Not," he paused again, "otherwise."

"Do you mean that you will leave me here to die alone? Oh, you could not—you could not be so wicked!" I cried in incredulous horror; and I clasped my hands frantically round his arm.

"That is just what I do mean," he said. "I told you once that the time might come when you would have to choose your bridegroom between death and me. Well, it has come; make your choice."

The cold deliberation in his voice, the cruel look in his eyes, almost maddened me. I was so angry, and I loathed him so intensely, that I lost all sense of fear suddenly. I almost forgot the cruel death that came nearer every instant; and I unclasped my hands from his arm, and threw back my head, and looked at him straight in the face.

"If I must choose between death and you, I choose—death," I said, in a voice as deliberate and calm as his own. "I would rather die a hundred times than live to be the wife of such a base, pitiful coward as you have proved yourself to be to-day!"

He winced a little at that and at the contempt and hatred which I threw into my voice and face as I spoke; but he laughed again.

"Remember his embraces will crush the life out of you; his kisses scorch you," he said.

"His embraces would be more welcome, his kisses sweeter to me than yours could ever be," I retorted. "Beside, after all," and I smiled, scornfully, "it will be an easy death enough. There is plenty of chloral in Martin's medicine-chest. I know exactly how much to take, and I will do it as soon as—it seems necessary! There will be no pain, no suspense, only a long, dreamless sleep!"

"Yes, a sleep from which there is no awakening—which is the end of everything," Piet said, sneeringly.

"Neither you nor I can tell that," I answered. "However, I prefer to risk it, rather than accept life on the terms you offer. I love Martin; how dearly you can never understand, for you do not know what real love is."

I think my words, and the determined tone in which I said them, and the loathing which I dare say was plainly visible in my face, almost drove him mad; if, indeed, he was not already so! His face flushed a dark, angry red; he gave an odd, gasping sound, and I remembered afterwards that he pressed his hand against his

side, as if in some sudden pain. He bent over me, and looked into my face.

"That is your final decision?" he said.

"Yes," I answered; and I turned from him and walked back towards the house. He looked after me for a minute, and then, with a stifled curse, he flung himself on his horse and rode away.

I stood and watched him until horse and rider were lost to sight in the distance; but even then, I could scarcely realize that Piet de Beer—whom I had known all my life—could really have abandoned me to a terrible death! But, when he had quite disappeared, all hope suddenly left me. I was alone. I, who had been sheltered from danger all my life long by Jesse's love, and Bridget's care, was left to face death—and such a death—alone!

I covered my face with my hands, and prayed for strength and courage. I reminded myself of the means by which I could, at all events, ensure myself a painless death; and then, with Dan still clinging close to my side, I re-entered the house, and went into Martin's room and unlocked the cupboard, where I knew his medicine-chest was kept. A few days before, Jesse had been suffering from violent toothache, which had kept him awake for several nights, and Martin had given him a dose of chloral. I was with him when he poured the fluid into a glass, and he had shown me how much might be taken with safety and bring refreshing sleep, and how much more would send a man into the sleep which, as Piet de Beer had told me, had no awakening.

The great calm, which I have read somewhere despair often brings to those for whom hope is past, came to me, as I took the bottle out of the chest and measured the liquid into a glass. I was safe, at all events, from the agonies of death by suffocation or fire. I felt sorry that I could not make Dan safe also. I did my best. I got some milk, and poured a strong dose of chloral into it, and coaxed him to drink; but after the first taste he would take no more.

An old cap, which Martin wore sometimes, was lying on the table. I took it up and kissed it; and I laid my head down on his pillow, and kissed that also; and then calling Dan to me, and with the chloral in my hand, I went out into the verandah—the pretty, shady verandah, where I had spent so many happy hours; where Martin had first kissed me and told me that he loved me; where the great joy of my life had come to me.

The fire was coming nearer now. Already through the smoke I could see the flash of the flame as it ran along and licked up the dry grass, and crackled among the low bushes. I told myself that I would wait till it reached a certain low fence which surrounded a paddock, then I would drink my chloral.

Twice I raised it to my lips, and twice, for life was very sweet—how sweet, I had never known before—to me, I dropped it again.

"Now I must take it," I said, and I patted Dan's head, and turned to give one last look across the veldt in the only direction from which help was possible, and I saw—oh, was there ever a more welcome sight seen by despairing eyes before!—far off, but coming nearer every instant, the figure of a man on horseback, with a led horse galloping by his side.

The sight inspired me with strength and confidence. I flung the chloral away; the glass fell with a tiny crash on the verandah floor; and, with Dan by my side, I flew out of the garden, and across the veldt. My eyes were aching and smarting with the smoke; but still they were keen enough to recognise Martin's features, and also to recognise in the horse that galloped by his side, Piet de Beer's black steed.

I remember vaguely wondering how it came to be there as I hurried on; but in another moment I heard Martin's cheery voice calling to me, bidding me take courage, for I was safe now, and felt the clasp of his arms round me as he swung me on to the black horse.

It appeared, from what Martin told me afterwards, that while they were in town a vague report of the grass fire reached Martin's ears. He felt alarmed respecting my safety, and, leaving a message at the hotel for Jesse, he instantly rode off home. While he was yet some miles away, he saw Piet de Beer approaching on his black horse. As he came nearer, he saw that De Beer's face wore a fixed, ghastly expression, that he seemed to have lost all control over his horse, and that he was swaying from side to side in his saddle. Just as Martin reached him, the black horse put his foot in an ant-bear's hole, and stumbled and fell, flinging De Beer heavily to the ground. Martin caught the horse's bridle as he galloped past, and went to De Beer's assistance, and found, to his horror, that he was quite dead.

"I did not waste much time on him, love," Martin said, stroking my hair cares-

singly, "for I was too anxious and too intent on reaching you—as, thank God, I did—in time. I drew his body under the shade of a clump of thorns, and then I galloped as hard as I could go to Holmwood. By the way, Molly"—he paused abruptly, and looked at me enquiringly—"he was not so very far from Holmwood. Had he been there?"

"Yes, he had been," I murmured.

And then I told him of Piet's visit, and of the shameful bargain which he had tried to drive with me; and as I told him, and saw the firm, stern look that at my words came into his face, and saw how the veins stood out on his clenched right hand, I felt truly thankful that Heaven had taken Piet de Beer beyond the reach of his revenge!

"The coward! the cursed coward! I can scarcely believe that any man could be so vile," he cried. "What will Jesse say when he knows?"

I looked up at him entreatingly.

"He must never know, Martin," I said, solemnly. "Piet de Beer was his friend, and he loved him well. Let us spare him the pain of knowing how unworthy of his friendship Piet was. He is dead now, dear; he cannot do us any more harm; and it is not well, you know, to speak evil of the dead, no matter how much they may have deserved it. We will try to forgive and forget, Martin; and, above all, we will never tell Jesse!"

And, we never did. To this day Jesse thinks kindly and tenderly of his dead friend, and mourns over his untimely fate with a never-ceasing regret. And I am well content that it should be so; well content that the memory of the wrong he did me should pass with all other earthly memories and passion, with grief and jealousy, and love and revenge, into the oblivion of that unknown "land where all things are forgotten."

THE VICAR'S AUNT.

By MARGARET MOULE.

CHAPTER I.

ONE lovely spring morning, the Reverend Thomas Clarke was sitting in the morning-room of his pretty country vicarage, taking breakfast in company with his aunt and cousin.

These words instantly suggest to the mind a picture of quiet rustic peace, placidly enjoyed by persons for whom the agitation and toil incident to the earlier and middle periods of life on this planet are, for the most part, over. And in the case of one of the individuals assembled the reality answered to this mental picture. The Vicar's cousin, who sat at the head of the table, engaged with the tea and coffee service, was what is invariably described either as "a maiden lady," or "a lady of uncertain age." But there was some slight certainty in this case—the certainty that Miss Maria Clarke's fiftieth birthday was recorded in archives of the past; not of the future. She was a distant connection of the Vicar's; her remote cousinship being to his father. She was by no means well off, and when, three years before, the Reverend Thomas Clarke had been appointed to the living of Fairmead, she had only too gladly fallen in with the arrangement when he suggested that she should come and keep house for him there. Miss Clarke was one of those people—and they, collectively, conduce unspeakably to the sum of human comfort—who have carried the science of housekeeping to an art; domesticity had "marked her for its own," and the fact seemed announced by every little jingle of the keys she wore hanging outside her severe grey gown.

But, with this one exception, the impression of elderly tranquillity, natural though it is, must be at once reversed, if the truth is to be arrived at.

There were on the head of the Reverend Thomas Clarke none of the snows of age. His countenance bore no deep trace of the wear and tear of years; as he cut the bread there were no visible signs of the abatement of his physical force, and the voice in which he offered to supply his aunt with the staff of life was full and vigorous. The age of the Reverend Thomas Clarke was thirty-two, and his personal appearance possessed great comeliness.

His aunt, who sat opposite to him at the small breakfast-table, was deficient in every characteristic that should have been hers, had the situation been arranged with becoming fitness, or with any due regard to the dignity of her position. Not only did she look no older than her nephew, but she did not even look so old as he did. The reason for this, however, was comparatively simple. As a matter of fact, she was not so old as he. She was exactly eight-and-twenty.

Miss Madeleine Farquhar made no secret of her age; indeed, she was apt to become defiantly aggressive when persons, who were intimate enough to do so, told her the truth; which was, that she frequently looked more as if her years were eighteen than eight-and-twenty. She had a great deal of wavy, dark hair, which she fastened up very badly—so badly, that it was always falling over her forehead, and coming close to her still darker eyebrows, and the pretty gesture with which she tossed it back seemed part of her personality, so often did she use it.

She tossed it back now, as she took the bread the Vicar handed to her, and mid, looking at him with a face the preternatural gravity of which seemed to emphasize the laugh lurking beneath it:

"Thomas, what is the use of all my trouble yesterday morning if you can't cut me a nicer bit of bread than that? You'll never understand notches. I do wish you'd let me have the bread in front of me, and cut it always."

"Then I should never get a reasonable slice myself," responded the Vicar.

Before his aunt could frame the answer which was waiting on her saucy lips, Miss Clarke interposed.

"It seems a pity, Tom," she remarked, gravely, handing him at the same time his second cup of coffee, "that you and your aunt should differ so frequently about the bread. It is so trifling a matter. Surely" she went on, turning to Miss Farquhar, "you are rather particular?"

"Particular! of course I am," laughed that young woman. "It's a very proper thing to know one's own mind accurately, isn't it, Thomas? Besides, it would be almost inconsistent, Miss Maria, if Thomas and I agreed about the shape of our bits of bread, when we differ about every single other thing."

Madeleine Farquhar helped herself to marmalade as she ended, and Miss Maria gasped.

Though it was a quiet gasp, and sheltered behind the coffee-pot, it was heartfelt. Since Miss Farquhar's arrival as an inmate of Fairmead Vicarage, a thorn had grown and flourished in poor Miss Maria's pillow. It had been planted there on the day when the Vicar first announced to her that his aunt, Miss Farquhar, had lost her only English home through the marriage and departure for Russia of the elder sister with whom she had lived, and that, as her

only other sister and brother were in India, she preferred to stay in England, and "live with you, Thomas, if you'll give me house-room," so ran the characteristic note which he ended his announcement by reading aloud.

With Miss Farquhar's actual arrival all Miss Maria's fears were realised. The house was, as poor Miss Maria pathetically phrased it, "turned upside down." Miss Farquhar gathered people around her to play tennis, stirred up her nephew to frantic energy in the shape of village concerts and entertainments of every sort, attended personally every possible social function—from a county dinner party to a dance at the young women's institute in Fairmead—and generally went erratically in and out of the Vicarage "like sunshine." At least, so her nephew and others characterised Miss Farquhar's lively course of action; "like a dreadful firework," poor Miss Maria, had she been given to imagery, would have paraphrased the comment.

She concentrated her attention now resolutely on the coffee-pot, feeling this the right thing to do, both for the sake of her own self-respect, and also in order to set Miss Farquhar some example of proper womanly demeanour. Miss Maria was of opinion that much might be done by example. But at this moment, at all events, the plan failed. Miss Farquhar did not even look at Miss Maria as she handed her cup for some coffee; her brows were gathered into a deep and reflective frown, which phenomenon found outward expression a moment later, as she leant one elbow on the table, and said, in a serious and considering voice, to her nephew:

"By the way, Thomas, have you written those notes to the people about the decorations, yet?"

"No," he answered, equally seriously, "since you ask me, I have not."

"Thomas! Oh, Thomas!" she exclaimed.

"Well, Madeleine!" answered her nephew, calmly.

It had cost the Reverend Thomas some thought and anxiety, on entering into daily intercourse with her, to decide on a suitable appellation for his aunt. Finally, her full Christian name had seemed to him a happy compromise between the impossibility of "aunt," and her family name of Madge.

"Oh, Thomas!" she repeated, "you've absolutely no promptitude about you! There's only this week to settle it in; I reminded you of that on Sunday; and all

the people to ask, and the arranging of the church to be thought out. We may as well do that now," pushing her plate away and leaning both elbows on the table, facing him.

"Very well," said the Vicar, "I had already given the subject some alight thought," he added.

"I'm going through the people," pursued his aunt. "There's Mr. Smith; of course he'll help."

"That remains to be seen," responded the Vicar, briefly.

"Oh, that's settled; I saw him yesterday, and told him he was to."

She paused one moment, and in the pause: "There's Miss Gilbert," said the Vicar, "what is she to do?"

"Just exactly what it's most convenient for her to do," said Miss Farquhar, sternly and hastily. "Now, Thomas," she went on, "there is Mrs. Winchester, Lucy Bayly, Miss Marsden——"

"I thought Miss Marsden might undertake the east end," interrupted the Vicar, tentatively.

"The east end," ejaculated his aunt, "I mean to do that myself, Thomas."

"I—I had thought of having a little conversation with you, Madeleine," her nephew began, with a sudden nervousness in his voice.

"Conversation! What need is there for any conversation? I know how you had it decorated at Christmas; and I believe I could do it as well as that," she ended, a little sarcastically.

"Oh, I didn't mean—it's not that, Madeleine—it's—I——"

But the Reverend Thomas Clarke's confusion and conversation were suddenly cut short by the entrance of the parlour-maid.

"Miss Gilbert would like to see you, sir," she said, addressing her master. "She is in the drawing-room. She is sorry to disturb you so early, but it's about some plants for the church."

"I'll come, Mary."

"And I'll come, Thomas," said his aunt, rising hastily; "and you'll come, Miss Maria," turning to her with a sudden look of camaraderie, instantly responded to by Miss Clarke.

"Plants for the church!" observed Miss Farquhar, in a low and sardonic murmur.

"A forward young person," was Miss Maria's response, as his body-guard of two prepared to follow the Vicar into the presence of his admiring and aspiring parishioner.

CHAPTER II.

"My dear Tom," said Miss Maria, mildly, putting her head in at the study door the next afternoon at three o'clock, "it seems to me that your aunt is—calling to you."

A person of less refined susceptibilities than Miss Maria might have said "whistling for you." For, as she held the study door open, the sound of Madge Farquhar's voice came in, exerted in a clear whistle of two notes—a whistle which she had invented and used as a call between herself and her nephew. Poor Miss Maria's feelings as to this mode of summons were such that she could only ignore the terrible sound as a rule. But to-day the pretty whistle had been so strong and continued, that Miss Maria felt obliged to leave her sewing, and make in the study a veiled allusion to the fact.

As she did so, the Reverend Thomas Clarke rose wearily from his writing-table chair.

"Tell Madeleine I shall be ready in ten minutes," he said; "not before."

And as Miss Maria promptly departed to carry out his wishes, the Vicar walked to the window and looked out with an anxious expression on his face. His aunt had asked him to go with her this afternoon, and call personally upon the more important of the decorators to ask their help with the church.

"Notes are too late now, Thomas," she had said, sternly; "we must call."

The Reverend Thomas, though feeling that his slight procrastination had met with indeed a severe chastisement, thought at the same time that the walk this involved would provide an excellent occasion for the "conversation" he had spoken of to his aunt, and assented. Therefore, after lunch, he sought the retirement of his study to think the "conversation" in particular, and things in general, well over before starting. He had important matter for thought.

Miss Madeleine Farquhar was a grave care to her nephew in many ways. Not the least of them arose from the fact that she possessed a considerable fortune; and from this point of view was likely to be much sought after by the least desirable or eligible kind of men. Then her own attractive manner and irresistible charm made her the recipient of endless stories of hopeless devotion; and on every one of her unlucky admirers she smiled equally winningly, and encouraged each and all alike.

Some little time before her arrival at Fairmead, the uninteresting and eminently steady-going married curate had been succeeded by another, the Reverend Stuart Smith by name.

He was young, good-looking, very popular, and, except for his salary, utterly penniless. This trifling detail apart, he was very eligible; what is more, he thought so; and came to Fairmead prepared to find a young woman who should think so also. He had cast tentative glances around him; but his critical and mature mind had not arrived at any decision when Miss Farquhar appeared at Fairmead. With his first sight of her, all the Reverend Stuart Smith's hesitation was over; he sought her society assiduously, and paid her every possible attention that might signify to her that he was prepared to place his salary and his cottage lodgings at her disposal. And Miss Farquhar treated him, as she would have said, "just like the rest."

It was this state of things that was making the Vicar anxious. He had seen—for they were undisguised—the Reverend Stuart's intentions; and he saw his aunt's proceedings—which were equally undisguised—from a man's point of view. She was, he said to himself, "giving Smith every encouragement;" and he did not in the least see how to prevent the imminent crisis. He could only form, as a temporary precautionary step, a firm resolution that Mr. Smith and his aunt should see as little of one another as possible.

And now the prospects of the Easter decorations had rendered the distracted Vicar well-nigh hopeless. It seemed to him an occasion fraught inevitably with fatal consequences. In the church Miss Farquhar and Mr. Smith must be thrown together incessantly throughout a whole day. "And who knows what Madeleine won't do!" thought her afflicted nephew. Therefore the object of his present reflection was to find means to induce his aunt to absent herself from the scene in question; but at the end of his hour's contemplation he had thought of no stratagem, wile, or cunning by which he might gain his end; nor, indeed, had any form of words in which to broach the subject at all occurred to the unfortunate man when he at length presented himself in the hall, where stood Miss Farquhar, impatiently swinging her umbrella.

"Where do you want to go first, Thomas?" she said.

"Where you like," he answered, meekly. "We'd better take Mrs. Winchester first," she went on, briskly. "You're late, and there may not be time for all, and she's much the most important."

Her nephew opened the garden gate as she spoke, and they issued forth together.

The walk was a pretty one, and, on this April afternoon, everything was looking very beautiful in the spring sunlight. The hedges with their faint green, the primroses under the high banks, the soft blue of the sky, with the white little clouds blown across it by a soft west wind, all made up a picture which quieted by its beauty even Miss Farquhar's high spirits. At least, it is to be inferred so, for her mischievous, laughing face grew thoughtful, and she spoke very little during the first ten minutes. The Vicar spoke not at all. Every now and then he energetically hit some small stone into the far distance along the lane with his walking-stick; and seemed by his manner to intend this action as a prelude to a speech. But the speech did not follow; and at the fourth repetition of the prelude, Miss Farquhar turned to her nephew, and said, enquiringly:

"Thomas, what in the world is wrong? Anything in the parish?"

She looked at him as she spoke, with a rather anxious look on her pretty face, for Madeleine Farquhar was, in spite of all her provoking, saucy ways, at the bottom of her heart truly very fond of "Thomas," as she made a point of calling him, and very sympathetic to him.

They were now only three minutes' walk from Mrs. Winchester's door; the sight of her house so near gave the Vicar a spasmodic courage, and he said, after a little pause:

"Madeleine, I alluded to it yesterday. I—really cannot allow you to decorate."

Miss Farquhar looked at him with the gaze of one who looks upon a dreamer.

"Do you mean what you began to say at breakfast, yesterday?" she asked, calmly. They were by this time on Mrs. Winchester's doorstep, and as the door was opened, "Wait till we come out," she added, in a tone that carried its own tale to the Vicar's mind.

Mrs. Winchester was talking to another caller as the Vicar and his aunt were shown in; but she rose instantly, and came forward to greet them. She was a little, well-meaning, overdressed woman, neither old nor young.

"I am very glad to see you, Miss Farquhar," she said. "Won't you sit

there, Mr. Clarke?" motioning him to a chair beside herself, near the tea-table. The Vicar turned to find the chair she indicated, and became, as he did so, aware of the other caller; the other caller was the Reverend Stuart Smith. The Vicar nodded to him faintly; but Miss Farquhar, with a mischievous look at her nephew, said, coolly:

"Thomas, you will tell Mrs. Winchester what we came for?" and established herself forthwith in a chair close by Mr. Smith.

The Vicar took one moment to gather his forces, while his hostess poured out two cups of tea, one of which she was just handing to the Vicar to convey to his aunt, when it was reft from her by the energetic Mr. Smith, who had watched his opportunity from afar. As he took it, he remarked cheerily to the Vicar:

"I have arranged satisfactorily for the library, so as to give me plenty of time on Saturday for the church."

"Indeed!" was the only response the Vicar found possible at the moment. And then he was obliged to watch Mr. Smith carry, in an agile manner, the tea and cake across the room, and triumphantly ensconce himself beside Miss Farquhar.

An anguished glance at his aunt was followed by a sudden desperate sense that it behoved him to speak to his hostess, and the Vicar pulled himself together, and valiantly opened the conversation. In a few words as possible he spoke of the object of his visit; he asked her to help in the church and to undertake her usual work of decorating the font; and he received the ready acquiescence of one who has been hoping for the request, and wondering why it tarried. And, wholly unconscious of her Vicar's terseness and abstraction, Mrs. Winchester went on to lay before him an elaborate description of all that she had provisionally designed in the way of decorative art. But the description fell on unheeding senses. The Vicar grew more and more abstracted; until, at length, if she had proposed to drape the chancel arch in the Union Jack, and the belfry window in the Stars and Stripes, he would have given a cheerful, unconscious acquiescence to either, or both. All his attention was absorbed by his aunt and Mr. Smith, and, quite regardless of any decorum, he listened intently to every scrap of their conversation which came across the hearthrug.

That his aunt was arranging with Mr. Smith to help her in her decorations grew clearer and clearer to his agitated perceptions; and when, after what seemed

to her nephew an interminable time, she rose, her last words were unmistakeable.

"You'll be sure to be in good time," she said to Mr. Smith, "and bring me plenty of moss."

Mr. Smith took his leave at the same time as they did, but their ways, fortunately for the Vicar's feelings, separated on the doorstep; as it was, he scarcely waited for Mr. Smith's severely-correct clerical figure to disappear, before he turned to his aunt.

"Madeleine," he said, "I hardly know how best to express myself."

"Don't trouble, Thomas," she responded.

"My feelings about your demeanour to—to—my curate," he could not bring himself at the moment even to name the individual in question, "are quite beyond expression. But you surely must understand now why I ask, I desire, you not to decorate."

"Indeed, Thomas, I don't! If it's because Mr. Smith is—rather foolish—that is too absurd. Let me assure you, you are agitating yourself quite unnecessarily. I intend to decorate; and I intend Mr. Smith to help me," she ended, laughing.

"Madeleine——" he began.

"Thomas," she interposed, still laughing, "it's not the least use to waste words on me; and, there's another thing to be said. If for no other reason, I should come to the church on Saturday to look after you."

"To look after me!"

"To look after you. If some one does not keep a sharp look-out on her, Miss Gilbert will propose to you and marry you by main force."

"Miss Gilbert!" stammered the unfortunate man, with a bewildering sense that this was indeed carrying the war into the enemy's own country. "Indeed, indeed, Madeleine, you are wholly mistaken."

"Indeed, indeed, Thomas, I am not," she retorted. "She would marry you to-morrow."

"But I've no intention, whatever, of marrying her," said the Vicar, earnestly.

"That makes no difference. She has the intention. And I shall devote myself to saving you."

"I shall devote myself to the faint hope of saving you," he answered. "Madeleine, I do wish you would reassure me. Perhaps I am wrong after all; perhaps you really have no intention of accepting Mr. Smith?" he ended, imploringly and interrogatively.

"Mr. Smith is a very nice young man," returned his aunt, demurely.

"But utterly unsuitable!"

"A very nice young man!" she repeated, emphatically.

"Inaligible to the last——"

The Vicar was interrupted. At that moment a man rode by; a tall man, not very young, and with a rather wild, careless expression on his pleasant, handsome face. His eyes brightened as he greeted the Vicar and Miss Farquhar. Miss Farquhar bowed; the Vicar said, rather coldly, "Good morning, Meldrum"; and as the man rode out of sight he turned again to his aunt, and said:

"To go back to Smith. I can only say that you might as well marry Meldrum. A careless ne'er-do-well of a doctor with no prospects is no worse than a penniless curate with a living in the dim future."

"He's got no one to care for," said Miss Farquhar, half-reflectively and irrelevantly.

"His step-sister," began her nephew, "Janet——" Then, breaking off suddenly, he said: "Madeleine, I can say no more. You know my mind. If you persist in your determination, I can only do my best to look after you."

"And I shall do my best to look after you," she answered. "And you've no idea how well the east end will look when Mr. Smith and I have done."

CHAPTER III.

It was early on the morning of the Saturday before Easter, and Fairmead Church was standing in the full glory of April sunshine. It was a beautiful old church, almost untouched by nineteenth century "restoration," or what is, if possible, worse—the same process carried out according to eighteenth century lights. It had seen its first freshness before the Wars of the Roses, and while generation after generation of peaceful Fairmead people had lived and died close to it, and the stir of great events in the outside world had worn through four centuries, the country church stood just the same, looking as if on it Time had forgotten to do his work fully, and had only left slight touches, in the shape of worn pillars and dulled outlines here and there.

Through the large east window the sun shone on a pretty, unconventional scene; the inside of the church was a confused whole of colour, light, and movement.

Great masses of dark moss, pale primroses, and yellow daffodils lay about in baskets, or loose in picturesque confusion on the old grey stone pavement, every-

whera. And their fresh, strong scent was mixed with a stronger breath from sweet hothouse lilies, delicate cyclamens, cythus, and primulas, which stood waiting to be used, in groups here and there, at the base of a pillar.

There were moving figures everywhere. Mrs. Winchester was kneeling in front of the font, with flowers on each side of her, and girls, with hands full of wreaths, or lovely loose flowers, were moving to and fro between the window-sills, pillars, and arches, and knocking surreptitious nails into the pulpit and reading-desk in support of their handiwork.

In the most conspicuous position in the whole church, full in view from every corner of it, sat Miss Gilbert, working with frantic haste at a large wreath.

Miss Gilbert was an amiable young person of three or four-and-thirty, who, having more than once heard herself described as "getting on," had firmly resolved not to "get on" alone—in other words, she had determined to marry—and, by dint of intense personal belief in them, she had contrived to establish her "attractions" as a firm fact in the minds of all her friends; first and foremost among them, ever since his arrival in Fairmead, she had enrolled the Reverend Thomas Clarke.

On her entrance into the church, two hours earlier, she had proposed to Miss Farquhar, with great friendliness and sweetness, that she should wreath the nave pillars, thinking this an undertaking to be carried out in her own time and plan, and affording boundless possibilities of assistance from her Vicar.

Miss Farquhar had met the proposition with even more sweetness of demeanour.

"An excellent idea!" she said. "I had already thought of them, Miss Gilbert, and have taken the length. I thought, also, it would be well to make them here," indicating the before-mentioned conspicuous position. "I have had the moss laid here; and there is a good support," fastening up a measured string she had taken from her pocket, while Miss Gilbert stood speechless and helpless beside her. "I think they should be begun at once," she added, pensively. "There are, I think, eight pillars. I will send Janet Meldrum to help you."

And smiling sweetly on Miss Gilbert, Miss Farquhar had begun her own avocations.

In the midst of his decorators and decorations the Reverend Thomas Clarke walked backwards and forwards. Up and

down the middle aisle, into the transept, and through the chancel he walked—with a walk that was anxious, and so incessant, that he might be said to pervade the whole church. He cast tentative, distant glances every now and then in the direction of Miss Gilbert, and the girl who was helping her—Janet Meldrum, a fair-haired, fragile-looking girl with a delicate, expressive face, who led a rather lonely life with her step-brother, the clever and careless doctor of Fairmead. But he never paused there; his walk invariably tended to one destination, and that destination was the chancel—and that especial part of the chancel where his aunt, perched on a ladder, was engaged in placing moss on a sloping frame in the sill of the east window; while, at the bottom of the ladder, holding up a good-sized clothes-basket full of moss, stood the Reverend Stuart Smith.

At half-past twelve Miss Farquhar descended suddenly.

"That'll do, Mr. Smith, for the present, I think," she said; "I've done half, and my arm aches. The moss is so full of bits, too; suppose we sort it a little? Bring it to the choir-seats, and we can sit down and turn it over together."

Mr. Smith assented radiantly, and as they established themselves close together, with the moss at their feet, Madeleine Farquhar cast a wicked look of defiance at her unhappy nephew, who was just then anxiously ending his nineteenth perambulation in their vicinity. He said nothing, but his countenance turned blue with hopeless anguish; then a sudden idea seemed to break upon his gloom, and without consulting his watch, he precipitately left the church, hurried across the churchyard to the Vicarage, and gave orders that the luncheon gong should be rung at once. Miss Farquhar heard it, as her nephew intended she should; she rose, and throwing the bits of moss lightly from her skirts, said to Mr. Smith:

"Come in to lunch, won't you?"

And the Vicar, returning to see the success of his plan, met them both on the front doorstep. At luncheon the Vicar was silent and laconic when Miss Maria enquired with interest "how they were getting on." But his aunt more than made up for his silence, by imparting to Miss Maria every detail of the work which she and Mr. Smith had accomplished and yet intended to accomplish together.

On rising from the luncheon-table the Vicar was detained by the parlour-maid;

he thereupon went into the kitchen for a moment, and then, his countenance blue no more, sped joyously after the other two to the church.

"Smith," he said, breathlessly, as he gained the east end, "old Mrs. Mason has just sent for either you or me to come directly, she does not expect to live till morning. I cannot possibly leave, of course! Will you go to her at once?"

Mr. Smith let the clothes-basket fall.

"Mrs. Mason!" he said, in a voice fraught with innumerable emotions.

"Mrs. Mason," said the Vicar, firmly, and as he added, "you'll not lose any time, Smith?" each man looked at the other. Each knew well the facts of the case; namely, that this was at least the fiftieth time the parishioner in question had not expected to live till morning, and had demanded instant ghostly counsel and comfort; that she was as likely as not to outlive them both; and that her cottage was nearly two miles away. Mr. Smith looked from his Vicar to Miss Farquhar, and then at the Vicar again; but as even Miss Farquhar's rapid expostulation brought no sign of relenting to the latter's face, he dejectedly straightened his collar, sought his hat, and promising Miss Farquhar to come back at once, departed through the chancel door.

The Vicar, as it shut, refrained from entering into conversation with his aunt, and sauntered in a light-hearted manner to where Miss Gilbert, with Janet Meldrum's help, was feverishly toiling through the seventh wreath.

"Thomas," called Miss Farquhar, from the ladder, in a voice corresponding to a certain description in the Commination service, "Thomas, will you help Janet put flowers into those wreaths which are already put up? You will spare her for a little, Miss Gilbert? The flowers are in the transept, Thomas, and Janet knows exactly what is wanted, if you will hand them to her."

With a simple, "Yes, Madeleine," her nephew meekly left the chancel, accompanied by Miss Meldrum.

The sun grew lower and the shadows longer, and Miss Gilbert ended her last wreath, and, without one comment from Miss Farquhar, bore it away triumphantly. Miss Farquhar did not even see her go. Her attention was otherwise engaged. From her ladder she could see into the street of Fairmead, and apparently she had seen something unexpected there, for she descended the ladder in sudden haste, a

bright colour in her face. The chancel door opened as she did so, and a man came up to her, the same man who had ridden by Miss Farquhar and her nephew two days before. He took her hands in his, quickly, and said, in a low voice:

"Miss Farquhar, I knew I should find you here. May I speak to you? I've had some good news to-day—about money—and I couldn't wait—you know what I want to say; but I can't say it here," looking anxiously round at the distant forms of the other decorators.

Miss Farquhar looked through her downcast, long lashes at Dr. Meldrum, and then round the church. Finally she said, very low:

"I was going to look at the effect of my work from the lancet window, in the tower. If you like to come in by the tower door, you may."

The wreaths were all completed with flowers, and with a fervent hope that her nephew might be safely gone home to tea, Miss Farquhar opened the little door at the foot of the tower stairs. A moment later Dr. Meldrum joined her, and they went up the short stairs together. They went up, that is to say, until by a sudden turn of the winding stair, about three steps below it, the window in question became visible. And then Miss Farquhar, who was in front, stopped suddenly. Not half-a-dozen yards from her, against that very window, stood her nephew, his arm round Janet Meldrum's waist, and her head on his shoulder.

"Thomas!" she exclaimed, with the authority of an aunt.

"Madeleine!" he answered, in the tone of a guardian, as Meldrum came into view.

Miss Farquhar's authority suddenly vanished.

"We're engaged, Thomas," she said; "at least," she stammered, in crimson and ungrammatical confusion, "we're going to."

Her nephew was equally ungrammatical, but unconfused.

"Janet and I have," he responded.

NOTICE.

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1891.

[SIXPENCE.

A BRIDE OF A SUMMER'S DAY.

A Complete Story.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "Lady Lovelace," "A Red Sister," etc.

CHAPTER I.

CRASH went the bells from All Saints tower; "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight," jangled the bells of old Saint Clement's in response; and then All Saints fired off its volley again.

The crowd parted, the children scattered their flowers, and the bride passed out of the church leaning on the arm of her newly-made husband.

Very fair to look at was this bride. She was tall and slender in figure, and owned to features that might have been chiselled out of a block of marble, for their faultless regularity. Her complexion was a pure white, with scarce a vestige of colour. Hair of a bright, dark brown; eyes of a deep grey, over-arched with long, sweeping eyebrows, that finished in a delicate line on the temples, completed the picture.

This was Ida, elder daughter of George, fifth Baron Culvers, on the day that she was married to her cousin, Captain Sefton Culvers, late of the Royal Hussars.

Between the bride and bridegroom there was just that amount of likeness that might be expected between such near relatives; that is to say, he owned to a figure as tall and lithe as hers, a nose as straight, eyes as large and luminous. But there likeness ended. The look from the girl's eyes was clear and straightforward; the look from the man's was neither the one nor the other, and could the long, dark moustache, which hid the lines and curves of his mouth, have been removed, the receding chin and long, unleft upper lip, which mark the pleasure-loving, vacillating nature, would at once have stood revealed.

"A very suitable marriage; she has the money, he will have the title," said certain of the wedding-guests, as they settled themselves in the carriages that were to convey them from the church to the house, two miles out of the town, which had been lent to Lord Culvers for the occasion.

And then they fell to discussing sundry scraps of gossip afloat in society respecting the bride and her family; how that since Lord Culvers's second marriage, his home had not been exactly a paradise to him, for Ida, in spite of her loveliness, had a temper and a will of her own, and had known how to stand up not only for her own rights, but also for those of her twin-sister, Juliet.

"To think of a man in his position marrying his daughter's governess and chaperon," said an elderly dowager, who would not at all have minded being the second Lady Culvers herself.

And from that they drifted on to the discussion of other items in Lord Culvers's family life, his own placid, easy-going temper as compared with the restless, excitable temperament of his first wife—a temperament which there could not be a doubt she had bequeathed, together with her beauty, to her daughters.

"If they were not beauties and heiresses," said one, "no one would put up with their odd whims and fancies."

"To think," chimed in another, "that Ida chose to be married at Hastings for the whole and sole reason that her mother lies buried in All Saints churchyard! If she had been my daughter I would not have given way to such a ridiculous whim.

But there, every one knows how completely Lord Culvers is ruled by his womenkind."

Assuredly it seemed an odd fancy for a bride to choose the church for her wedding, for the reason that the funeral service had been read over her mother's coffin in the chancel of that church, some twenty years back.

A second strange fancy was to be announced by the bride before the day was over.

To the surprise of every one, when she came downstairs equipped for travelling, in a neat grey dress and hat, her beautiful bouquet of orchids and orange-blossoms was still in her hand.

"What are you going to do with it, Ida?" asked one of the bridesmaids, coming forward; "you surely don't mean to carry it away with you?"

But that was exactly what she did mean to do. She stooped—for he was a short man—and kissed her father, then she shook hands rather formally with her step-mother, then passed on to her sister, to whom she gave one long kiss, a kiss that was in very truth a farewell and a "Heaven bless you!" though not a word was spoken by either.

It was at the door of the carriage that stood waiting to convey her and her husband to the railway station, en route for the Swiss lakes, that the destination of the bridal bouquet was to be revealed.

"Sefton," said the girl, turning to her husband, and speaking in a tone that had more of a command than a request in it, "will you tell the coachman to drive first to All Saints churchyard—I want to lay these flowers on my mother's grave."

The guests assembled under the porch, with their rice and old satin shoes, exchanged glances. It was like the sound of a funeral-bell in the midst of a feast.

"My dear love!" cried Lady Culvers, rustling forward in her silks and velvets, "let some one else do that for you!" then, as Ida deigned no reply, and the coachman touched his horses with the whip, she turned to Juliet, who was standing at her elbow straining her eyes to see the last of her darling sister, and exclaimed, "Oh, what odd fancies she has! Where can she get them from?"

"From my father, of course," answered Juliet, promptly; "his odd fancies are only too well known." And the tone in which she spoke the words gave as their under-current of meaning: "If it had not been

for my father's odd fancies, you would be Miss Pigott at the present moment, our devoted and obedient chaperon, writing our letters for us, doing everything in fact that we didn't feel inclined to do, and showering gratitude upon us in return for our odds and ends of silks and laces."

These two sisters resembled each other in face and figure as only twin sisters could; Juliet, in fact, might have been called the replica of Ida, with *Hesnae*, however, given to the artist to repeat his original design with a lighter brush and in slightly brighter colour. And not alone in face and figure was their twinning proclaimed, in temperament and character the same striking resemblance was apparent. Each was bright, gay, imaginative, quick-tempered and quick-witted, and, as a rule, the wishes and opinions of one might have been taken without a question as the wishes and opinions of the other. What of seriousness, if any, might lie beneath their apparently reckless gaiety of mood and manner would have been a difficult question for even their most intimate friends to determine.

The cloud that had gathered on Juliet's face as she had kissed her farewell to her sister disappeared with the sound of the carriage wheels that bore her away. She looked around at the guests. To her fancy they all more or less appeared bored or triste. Even her father's placid face, with its benignant smile, had an unmistakable look of weariness upon it—a look which said plainly as words could: "I wish to goodness all this fuss and botheration were over, and I could quietly slip away to an easy-chair and a cigar."

It was too tempting! Something she must do, some one she must stir into animation, or she would become drowsy and stupid, like the rest.

So she crossed the room to her father's side, a vision of poetic loveliness in her soft, white silk robes, with their main trimmings and tea-roses, but with a smile on her lip, and mischief in her heart, that would have suited sprite Puck himself.

"Father," she said, in the quiet, cooing voice she generally affected when one of her most tricky moods was upon her, "about twenty names have just come into my head—of people who ought to have been asked to-day. And they all begin with an 'N'! Is it possible that when Ida and I made out the list we turned over two leaves of the visiting-book together, and so went on from 'M' to 'O'?"

There'll be no end of botherations when we get back to town."

Lord Culvers's benignant smile vanished. Nature had sent him into the world with a disposition as peaceful and placid as a still lake amid mountains, and Fate had linked his lot with temperaments as rest-less and turbulent as the ocean itself. Was life for him to be for ever whirlpool and worry?

An exclamation of annoyance rose to his lips. A voice, however, over Juliet's shoulder intercepted it.

"Juliet," it said, "come into the garden a moment. I want specially to speak to you. I haven't had an opportunity before."

The speaker was a man of about eight-and-twenty, a tall, well-built young fellow, with crisp, curly hair of a reddish-brown, and very prominent, very bright, brown eyes. His face was of the type one sees in classic pictures or Roman sculpture, and that one associates with the helmet, spear, and shield of Mars, or of Hector, or Achilles. And lo! he came of a race that had been money-grubbers for generations—the Redways of London, Liverpool, and New York, world-renowned as merchant-princes, and of late years as financiers and bankers.

This was Clive Redway, Juliet's affianced lover, only son of Joshua Redway, the present representative of the firm, and the owner of large estates in two English counties, a deer-forest in Scotland, and one of the most palatial of modern houses to be found in London.

Juliet followed her lover into the garden.

Glynde Lodge, the house that had been lent to Lord Culvers for the wedding, was small and unpretending, and stood in a few acres of land abutting on the high-road between Ore and Hastings.

The trees it owned to were ill-grown and but few in number, consequently, although the rays of the June sun were already beginning to slant, the unshadowed lawn and gravelled walks did not look attractive as promenades.

"Oh, my complexion!" cried Juliet, holding her bouquet of tea-roses slantwise over her face, and leading the way across the lawn to a small arbour at its farther end.

"Never mind about your complexion just for once," said the young man, almost irritably; "I want to know about this wedding. Last night, you know, I couldn't

get you alone for five minutes. I was never more astounded in my life than when I had your letter, six weeks ago, just as I was starting for home. Why, when I left for the Cape, it was not even talked about. You knew next to nothing of this cousin of yours."

"That was because he was always away with his regiment, you know. But we had always heard that he was charming, and delightful, and fascinating"—this with a mischievous side-glance at her companion—"and when father asked him to spend Christmas with us, at Dering, I jumped and clapped my hands, and ordered the loveliest tea-gowns and ball-dresses, and——"

"Do be serious a moment, Juliet; I want information. Remember, I know next to nothing how the thing came about."

"Oh, well, I suppose it came about in the usual way. I've no doubt he asked her and she said 'Yes.' I don't suppose she asked him."

Clive made a gesture of annoyance.

"To think that Ida should throw herself away on such a man as that!" he said in a low, constrained tone.

Juliet arched her eyebrows at him.

"Why, what is the matter with him?" she exclaimed. "Our first cousin, next heir to the title, handsome, good talker, plays tennis delightfully, sings divinely! Why, I nearly fell in love with him myself."

Here she threw another mischievous side-glance at her companion, a glance, however, which was lost on him. They were now seated side by side in the arbour, and Clive was leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, his hands half covering his face.

He did not speak for a minute or two. Juliet began beating a tattoo with her satin slipper on the floor.

Presently, he had another question to ask. It was:

"What was it brought Ida home from Florence in such a hurry? When I started for the Cape, if you remember, she had just taken it into her head that she must be an artist, and had flown off to study in the Florentine Galleries."

"There go the Bethunes," said Juliet, "in the brightest of grass-greens—to match the buttercup tint of their complexions, I suppose. And there go the Murrays, in bluish-green and yellow, like so many tomtits."

From the arbour in which they were seated they could get a clear view of the drive, adown which the carriages of departing guests were now beginning to roll.

Again Clive made an impatient movement.

"Will you mind answering my question, Juliet?" he said in a tone that showed his annoyance.

"Oh, what was it? There go the St. Johns, in salmon-pink, both of them, and they're fifty if they're a day! Oh, I beg your pardon. What brought Ida back from Florence, did you say? My letters, I suppose. I used to fill pages with rapturous accounts of Sefton and his many good qualities, and I dare say she thought she would like to come and see him for herself. Oh, then, too, I told her how disagreeable Peggy had been over one or two things, and I suppose she thought she had better come home and take her in hand for a time."

"Peggy" was the nickname that the young ladies had bestowed upon Miss Pigott in the days of her chaperonage and general usefulness. They preferred to retain the name now that Miss Pigott had become Lady Culvers, and occasionally brought it out with admirable effect.

"And I suppose," said Clive, slowly, "when she came back that man was staying down in Northamptonshire with you, she was caught by his surface attractions, and before any one could say a word the thing was done. It's a marvel to me that your father did not put his veto on it at the outset."

"Father!" exclaimed Juliet. "Why, he was delighted. He knows that Sefton must sooner or later come in for the title, and for Dering, too, and that he hasn't money enough to keep it up, and it seemed to him a splendid arrangement that Ida's money should be kept in the family. There go the Conroys! Oh, that girl has been lead-pencilling her dimple again, one can see it a mile off! Every one's going, I think. I'd better go back to the house now. Peggy will be thinking too much of herself if I leave her to say the good-byes entirely on her own account."

They both rose. Juliet made one step forward, then paused.

"One moment, Clive," she said, "you've been asking me no end of questions—oh, I couldn't count them on my fingers—will you mind just answering one? What makes you dislike Sefton as you do? Do you really know anything against him?"

Clive flushed a deep red, and for a moment did not speak.

"According to your own showing," the girl went on, "you have only occasionally met him in society. There really can be nothing to bring against him, or, depend upon it, our kind friends, one way or another, would have been sure to have done so when they congratulated us on the marriage."

Clive drew a long breath.

"No," he said, slowly, "I suppose there is really nothing that I can bring against the man, although it has never been clearly explained why he sent in his papers to the Horse Guards. Your father knew of his debts, no doubt. All the world knew of them; but debts, though bad enough, are scarcely enough to condemn a man utterly. The only thing——"

He broke off abruptly, his face growing white and drawn as of a man in pain.

But Juliet did not note his change of expression. Her eyes were fixed on a distant view of an elaborate arrangement of peach-coloured satin and velvet, out of which looked the round red face of Lady Culvers.

"Oh, look at Peggy trying to do the dignified," cried the girl, laughingly. "Those are some of Ida's greatest friends, and my lady is bowing them out with stately dignity. I must go and detain them and gush over them for at least half an hour under her very eyelids!"

Clive did not follow her across the lawn to the house, but went his way along a narrow path which led circuitously through the orchard to another entrance, thereby avoiding a series of friendly recognitions from the departing guests; recognitions for which he felt strangely disinclined that day.

He drew his hat lower over his eyes; his face still looked white and drawn.

"There's no one who walks this earth good enough for her," he muttered to himself as he went along; and his eyes assuredly were not turned in the direction where Juliet, in her pretty white robes, stood "gushing" over guests whom Lady Culvers would fain have kept at a distance.

CHAPTER II.

FIVE o'clock chimed from All Saints tower as Captain Culvers handed his bride from the carriage at the churchyard gates. It was now over three hours since the

wedding had taken place, and the neighbourhood had returned to its normal quietude. When Hastings is crowded with holiday-makers, this unfashionable quarter of the town is comparatively deserted; and in June weather it is forsaken even by its inhabitants for the breezier hills and Marina. A shabby "fly" went crawling along; a few curly-headed, unwashed children came trooping forth from one of the alleys leading off the old-world street; a fisherman in a blue jersey strolled down from the Tackleway and paused for a moment to look at the handsome equipage drawn up alongside the pavement. Otherwise, Captain Culvers and his bride had the street to themselves.

A double flight of steps leads from the pavement to All Saints churchyard, which runs up the side of one of the two hills that dominate the old town. At the foot of these steps Ida paused.

"Let me go alone to my mother's grave, Sefton; I particularly wish it," she said; and once more her tone appeared to have more of command than of entreaty in it.

But it was not a request to be met with a demur, so Captain Culvers drew back, and allowed her to pass on alone.

Although the street was in shadow, the churchyard, on higher ground, lay in sunlight still. Very peaceful and picturesque it looked in the silence and brightness of the summer afternoon, with its grave-stones gleaming white from out the greenness of the hillside.

The path which Ida followed took a sharp curve at the east end of the church, and she was very quickly out of sight. Captain Culvers stood watching the tall, graceful figure, in its soft grey draperies, till it disappeared, saying to himself what a lucky fellow he was, after all his ups and downs in life, to have fallen on his feet at last.

Then he took out his cigar-case, and telling the coachman to walk the horses up and down, strolled down the street towards the sea.

He knew so little of Hastings, that the fish-market and the tall, black, shiny rope-houses came upon him as a surprise. The odours of the place, however, at the close of this summer's day were intolerable; so he turned his back on it, and the loitering fishermen, and the lazy, lapping summer sea, and returned to the shadow and quaintness of the old street, with its ancient overhanging houses, and queer by-ways.

Quarter-past five struck.

"The Captain will be getting impatient, I take it, soon," said John to Jehu on the box of the carriage, as they saw Captain Culvers pull out his watch and time it by the church clock.

"It's a big churchyard; there are a mighty lot of tombs there, perhaps the lady has lost her way," answered Jehu, lazily flicking the flies from his horses' manes.

Half-past five struck.

A little Italian boy with a barrel-organ and monkey rounded the corner of the street, and began grinding a feeble, droning sort of version of Garibaldi's Hymn, to which the monkey beat time with toy cymbals, much to the delight of the urchins, who now came trooping forth from all corners.

Jehu pulled up his horses with a jerk at the churchyard gate, saying that half an hour was time enough and to spare for the lady to have lost her way and found it again, deposited her flowers, and returned.

"They'll lose their train," whispered John, with a grin. "And then the Captain will lose something else, I take it—his temper."

Possibly Captain Culvers's fears had flown in the same direction, for, as he came sauntering up the street, he suddenly paused, pulled out his time-tables, and began consulting them with something of a frown gathering on his brow.

A quarter to six struck.

The little Italian boy ended his droning ditty, shouldered his organ and monkey, and departed, followed by a detachment of the admiring urchins.

Captain Culvers threw away his cigar, opened the churchyard gate, and began with rather a hurried tread to mount the steep flight of steps. It had not been swept since the wedding, and Captain Culvers as he went along crushed under his feet the remnants of the rose-buds and daisies that had been scattered for his bride.

Precisely at that moment Juliet, at the garden gates of Glynde Lodge, was saying a laughing good-bye to some of her girlfriends, who were telling her that they hoped shortly to be called upon to officiate as her bridesmaids.

"I'm not sure that I hope it," she answered. "A wedding like this, where everybody does what everybody else has done for generations, would be intolerable

to me. I told Ida last night I wondered how she could endure it. No; when I'm married I must do something to make a sensation—wear a nun's dress, or a riding-habit, or——”

“Juliet!” exclaimed her friend, “if you're going to do that sort of thing, I shall make a point of getting up in church and forbidding your banns!”

Juliet clapped her hands.

“The very thing! That would be heavenly!” she cried. “I only wish father would do it instead of you, and then there would be some fun in getting married. But there's no such luck in store for me. Father always approves our choice so exasperatingly, it takes all the delight out of getting engaged. I should adore, positively adore, Olive—not just like him, as I do now—if only every one in the house would run him down, and tell me I'm throwing myself away on him!”

And Olive was at her elbow, and distinctly heard her closing remarks—heard, but paid no heed to them—assuredly not the lover-like heed that might have been expected from a man just returned to his affianced bride after six months' absence at the Cape.

“Juliet,” he said, as the girl-friends waved their farewells, and drove away, “tell me a little about your arrangements. How long do you stay here? Remember, I know nothing about anything. Your letters were always so short——”

“So short?” interrupted Juliet, making her eyes very round. “Why, I remember distinctly that the very last letter I sent you covered the whole of a sheet of note-paper!”

“Yes, and from its first to its last word was nothing but a description of a young lady's dress that had excited your wrath at a fancy-dress ball. You did not answer any one of the questions I asked you.”

“That was her fault for wearing such a dress. It was pink chiffon over——”

“Oh, spare me, Juliet, I've had it once! Now will you answer my question? When do you return to town?”

But instead of answering him, Juliet fixed her eyes full on his face and said:

“How white and tired you look! What have you been doing with yourself?”

He gave a little forced laugh.

“Well, you know, a sea voyage isn't always the most exhilarating thing in the world. One gets awfully bored sometimes, shut up from morning till night with the same set of people.”

“I couldn't stand it for a week even. I should jump into the sea before I was out of sight of the land. Arthur Glynde has written some lovely verses about what he calls the ‘changeful, restless ocean’; but——”

Olive interrupted her impatiently.

“Never mind about what an incipient young poet has written, just tell me, Juliet, what I want to know. When do you go back to town?”

“Oh, but I do mind very much what this special incipient young poet writes, because he brings his verses to me at least twice a week, and reads them aloud. Yet we are friends!”

The last sentence was added in a sarcastic tone, with a marked emphasis on the conjunction.

Olive bit his lip.

“Once more, Juliet, will you——”

“Oh, don't say it again,” interrupted the girl. “Well, father and Peggy intend returning to-morrow in time for a luncheon somewhere or other. Some of the servants return to-night, because, of course, Mr. Glynde's servants are here, and the house isn't large, and—oh, by the way, wasn't it kind of Mrs. Glynde to lend her house in this way for the wedding, and to leave her horses and carriages behind—oh!”—here she broke off abruptly, with a little start—“I have an idea, Olive. A lovely one!”

“Let's have it. Something sensational of course!”

“Of course, or how could it be lovely! It's just this. Father and Peggy have set their minds on a quiet early dinner to-night, and have made all their arrangements for returning to-morrow. Now, wouldn't it be delightful to swoop down on them and insist—yes, insist—on going back to-night? Oh, the battle-royal there would be between me and Peggy! And I should be sure to carry the day. They're both tired out—limp as can be with the fuss of the wedding, and I feel as lively as a cricket and equal to anything.”

“I believe it! But if I were you I wouldn't go out of my way to have battle-royal with Lady Culvers. They'll come without any seeking, depend upon it. No, let your father have his dinner in peace to-night. There's ever so much I want to talk to you about—no end of adventures to tell you. Let us go for a stroll in the orchard—that is the orchard over there, isn't it?—and then we can talk without fear of interruption.”

But if he had no end of adventures to

relate, assuredly she did not hear them that evening as they strolled in the golden haze of the slanting sunlight among the low-growing apple and pear-trees.

"Now I must be on my guard against compliments," Juliet had said to herself as, side by side, they wandered along the narrow walk.

Her fears were needless. Compliments of the lover-like kind were evidently as far from his thoughts as adventures; for, from the time they swung back the orchard-gate till the clanging of the dressing-bell sent them back to the house, his talk was wholly and solely of one person, one thing—*Ida*, and her choice of a husband.

In fact, his conversation was simply a continuation of the one begun in the arbour in the early part of the afternoon. His questions were so many and so minute that Juliet at last threw back her head, held her chin very high in the air, and surveyed him with half-closed eyes, as she was in the habit of surveying her step-mother when catechised by her on matters which the wilful girl deemed outside parental jurisdiction.

"Really, *Olive*," she said at length, "if you had *Ida's* welfare so much at heart you should have managed to arrive a day or two sooner, and have cross-questioned her yourself as to *Sefton's* character and the state of her feelings towards him. I can only repeat that *Sefton* seemed to me very delightful, and I don't think *Ida* will ever feel dull with such a charming companion. I don't know what you mean by being 'devoted to him.' She certainly was never enthusiastic in his praises. But then, as you know, *Ida* and I both take our love affairs calmly."

While they had been talking, the sun had sunk behind a bank of apricot clouds, and the golden haze which had formed, so to speak, the atmosphere in which they had been walking, had changed in subtle mystic fashion to the silvery mist of twilight.

The clanging of the dressing-bell intercepted *Clive's* reply.

With the sound of the bell came the crunch of carriage-wheels along the gravelled drive.

"Visitors! How delightful!" cried Juliet. "Good-bye, after all, to the quiet dinner father was counting on. Could anything have happened more propitiously?"

But when they rounded the corner of the house and came in sight of the front

door her delight changed to amazement, for there, descending from the carriage, was no chance guest, but the bridegroom of the morning, *Captain Culvers* himself.

CHAPTER III.

"IMPOSSIBLE!" cried Lord *Culvers*, rubbing his forehead as if to waken his brain to something it refused to take in.

"Incredible!" echoed Lady *Culvers*, throwing up her hands, and standing in an attitude of amazement in the middle of the room.

"Did not return, did you say?" exclaimed Juliet, with wide-open eyes, advancing slowly, step by step, towards her cousin.

And then *Captain Culvers* had to tell his story all over again. It was to the effect that after waiting patiently for three-quarters of an hour for *Ida's* return from her mother's grave, he had grown alightly uneasy as to what might be detaining her, and had gone in search of her; but that, although he had found the bridal bouquet lying on the marble slab which marked the first Lady *Culvers's* resting-place, *Ida* was nowhere to be seen. There was not a soul in sight of whom he could make enquiries, so, after scouring every corner of the churchyard in vain, he had thought it best to return, to consult with her father and friends before he took farther steps in the matter.

Assuredly a strange story this! *Captain Culvers* told it with more of coherence than might have been expected of a man in the circumstances. But then *Captain Culvers* had something of a reputation for coolness at a crisis when most other men would have lost self-control. Some ten years back news of the sudden death of his father had been brought to him as he was in the very act of taking aim at a partridge, and he had carefully brought down his bird before he had turned to the messenger for farther tidings.

But for all his calmness, his face looked white and anxious, and it was difficult to believe that he was the man who had stood, only a few hours before, in that self-same room, receiving with triumphant pride the congratulations of his friends.

When he had finished his tale, for a moment every one looked in every one else's face, saying never a word.

Clive was the first to break the silence.

All this time he had been standing a little apart from the rest, with his back to the light. Now he came forward, speaking hurriedly—nervously, one might say.

"Something must have happened to her. There is no time to be lost. Search must be made in all directions before night. If you'll allow me, Lord Culvers, I'll go at once to the local police office."

Perhaps Captain Culvers thought that the expression "If you'll allow me," ought to have been addressed to him. The frown on his face deepened.

"If there is a hue and cry to be made, it will be my business," he said, curtly. "But it occurs to me that there may be another explanation to the affair. It is possible that Ida, with her love of fun and sensation, may be playing off some trick on me. Do you remember"—here he turned to Juliet—"what happened a month ago when you and she, promised to meet me at the St. Maurs', to join a party to Henley, and you took it into your heads to make a fool of me, and instead spent the day attending a succession of services at Westminster Abbey?"

Juliet's reply was prevented by the entrance of a servant, with a note which he presented to Lord Culvers—an odd little twist of paper with ragged edges, that appeared to have been torn out of a pocket-book.

Lord Culvers's hand trembled as he opened it.

"Ida's writing!" cried Juliet, looking over her father's shoulder.

There fell a moment of silence, and then Lord Culvers read aloud in a quaking voice:

"Do not be uneasy about me. I am with friends. I will write shortly.—Ida."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed a voice, so charged with deep feeling it was scarcely possible to recognise it as the voice of Clive Redway.

Captain Culvers started, and looked at him.

Clive did not trouble to acknowledge the look. In hot haste he followed the servant out of the room, to enquire by whom the note had been brought, and getting the reply, "an Italian organ-boy," he had set off at once, as with seven-league boots, in pursuit of the messenger.

Captain Culvers turned sharply to Juliet.

"You know something of this," he said, his suavity of manner for the moment entirely gone.

Lord Culvers came forward in great agitation.

"Is it possible that you and Ida together can have planned this piece of folly!" he exclaimed.

Lady Culvers came forward, ostensibly in even greater agitation.

"It is all of a piece with what has been going on for the past two years," she said, forgetting her usual dulcet tones. "Whenever one has taken a foolish idea into her head, the other, instead of helping me to reason her out of it, has joined in league against me."

"You! you! you!" exclaimed Juliet, turning her head from one to the other, and arching her brows at each in turn. "How can you imagine such nonsense! What fun should I get out of frightening you all into fits, with Ida not here to enjoy it with me?"

The argument on her lips seemed an unanswerable one.

"No," said Captain Culvers, slowly, "I can't fancy you helping to organise such a piece of folly unless you expected something in the shape of fun by way of payment."

"With friends," said Lord Culvers, looking down on the scrap of paper which he still held in his hand; "who can those friends be, I wonder?"

"Ah," said Lady Culvers, in a soft, sad voice, "the girls have many friends that I should not have chosen for them."

"That goes without saying," said Juliet, promptly and sarcastically.

Then, in succession they ran over the names of those on their visiting list whom it seemed probable Ida might have selected as her colleagues.

But it was all the wildest conjecture, and no definite conclusion could be arrived at.

"Well," said Captain Culvers, "all I can say is, whoever has arranged or connived at this piece of absurdity, shall not have the pleasure of seeing me raising a hue and cry over it."

His face was very white. He set his teeth over his last words.

"That's right, Sefton, that's right," said Lord Culvers, eagerly, "there must be no hubbub, and a hundred thousand tongues set going over this affair. No, no, it mustn't get into the papers, and my little girl be made the talk of the town."

In a flash of fancy the unlucky father saw a long string of carriages outside his house in Belgrave Square, and heard an

uninterrupted succession of knocks, rings, and enquiries for the missing bride.

"It would be terrible! We should all have to take flight somewhere," he went on, answering as it were his own thoughts. "It's disturbing, very. I'm altogether bewildered. I can't see what I ought to do." Then he turned suddenly to Sefton. "Tell me, what do you intend doing?" he asked, with great energy.

Sefton's reply was one word..

"Nothing."

"Nothing!"

"Nothing."

Lord Culvers stared at him a moment, and then began slowly to walk up and down the room with his hands behind his back.

"After all, perhaps that will be the wisest course," he said, at one end of the room; "things must come right if we let them alone. She is with friends; she will write, she says. Yes, yes, better be patient, and let things alone to take their course," he finished, at the other end of the room.

It had ever been the habit of his life thus to attempt a compromise between himself and life's difficulties.

"You won't even make an effort to find out where she is staying!" asked Juliet.

"My dear, she says she is with friends. I wish certainly she had chosen another time for her visit; but—but don't you remember once before she did something of the sort—started off to stay with the Murrays at Deaside without saying a word to anybody!"

"And don't you remember, dear love, how she and Juliet once packed up their boxes, and said they were going to keep house together in the village, and sent off the gardener's boy to look out for a cottage for them!" said Lady Culvers, sweetly and sadly.

"Ah, yes, yes, and they both went off to town alone, one day, and arranged for a week's lessons in elocution and acting so that they might both go on the stage the week after!" said Lord Culvers, his memory, jogged by his wife, suddenly becoming lively.

Captain Culvers cut the reminiscences short by a sudden question.

"Had Ida much money with her, do you know!—on that will very much depend the length of time her whim will last," he asked, curtly.

"I paid her her three months' dividends in notes last night," answered Lord Culvers, "and told her to put them away

carefully. I dare say, however, she stuffed them into her pocket after the manner of girls, and pulled them out with her pocket-handkerchief five minutes after."

"I beg your pardon," said Juliet, feeling herself called upon to take up the cudgels on Ida's behalf, "I saw her put the whole of the notes most carefully into a letter-case which I gave her last week, and then put that—also most carefully—into her pocket when she changed her dress."

"That means," said Sefton, "that Ida, if she is so disposed, can carry on her whim, or whatever you please to call it, for another six months."

Juliet narrowed her eyes and looked at him. It seemed to her that the deserted bridegroom was scarcely exhibiting the alternate fury and despair that might have been expected of a bridegroom in the circumstances.

He certainly had a white, beaten, crest-fallen look on his face; but otherwise he was clear-headed and prosaic to a degree.

"No, no, my boy," interposed Lord Culvers, "don't take such a gloomy view of things. She isn't likely to do that. Take my word for it, she'll write to-morrow, and come back the day after. Yes, depend upon it she will."

He recommenced his slow walk up and down the room, then suddenly paused in front of Sefton.

"An idea has come to me," he said, in a tone that might almost be called cheerful. "I'm sure you'll fall in with it, every one of you." And then he stated his idea in as few words as possible.

It was that Sefton should start at once for "anywhere"—that is to say, some place where he could live quietly and unnoticed for a time, and thus give the impression to "society" that he and his bride were on their wedding tour. So soon as news was received from Ida, Lord Culvers would himself go to her, and at once insist on her joining her husband.

The scheme approved itself to the family party, who grew prosaic in the discussion of its details.

"The 'anywhere' will be Paris; it is easier to hide in a crowd than in a wilderness," said Sefton, readily.

And once more Juliet narrowed her eyes and looked at him.

Outside the twilight was rapidly changing to night. A servant coming in to light the lamps was peremptorily dismissed. It seemed to the disturbed family conclave easier to discuss their difficulties in the

semi-gloom than with the glare of lamps lighting up their troubled faces.

But the entrance of the servant turned their thoughts to a necessary detail of Lord Culvers's scheme — what reason should be circulated in the household to account for Captain Culvers's sudden return to the house without his bride.

Here Lady Culvers came to the rescue, and proved herself a mistress of the art of glib fibbing to an extent that surprised even Juliet, who had been in the habit of saying to her girl friends what a mercy it was that apostles no longer walked the earth, or "Peggy" would assuredly have been wound up and carried out like Sapphira.

The story which Lady Culvers said she would herself put into circulation among the domestics was to the effect that Ida, overdone with the day's fatigues, had fainted on her mother's grave; had been thus found by the verger of the church, who had escorted her to his cottage at the back of the churchyard, there to rest and recover herself. There Captain Culvers had found her, and there he had left her while he had gone back at her request to tell her father that she did not feel equal to undertaking the proposed wedding tour, but instead would, after a day's rest in Hastings, go down to Devon on a visit to Captain Culvers's mother.

Thither Ida's maid, who was at that moment waiting at Saint Leonard's railway-station with trunks and boxes innumerable, was to be at once sent, and there she was to be told to remain awaiting farther orders.

"Of course," said Captain Culvers, "such a story won't bear criticism, and there isn't a servant in the house who'll be fool enough to believe it. But I can't concoct a better, so I suppose it must do. Now I'll ring for the cart to be brought round."

"One thing is certain," said Lady Culvers, her aptitude for fibbing far from exhausted, "the story will grow into something quite different long before it reaches town, and then we can correct and modify it according to circumstances. But it seems to me to suit our present disgraceful necessity."

Captain Culvers had a word to say to Juliet as he bid her good-bye.

"It was an immense relief to me to hear your energetic disclaimer of connivance with Ida in her folly," he said, looking at her steadily.

She gave him look for look.

"I made no energetic disclaimer, as you call it," she replied. "I would not condescend to such a thing."

For a moment they looked each other full in the face; but no more was said.

As Captain Culvers drove out through the lodge gates, Clive, weary-footed and dispirited, was coming in. His tramp along the high-road had been an unsuccessful one. The little organ-boy had disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened to receive him.

CHAPTER IV.

"It's a puzzle, Clive, from first to last. I feel as if we were trying to reason the matter out from an insufficient statement of facts. Come, have you nothing more to tell me?"

So spoke Joshua Redway, and then, leaning back in his chair, with eyes steadily fixed on his son's face, he awaited Clive's reply.

They were seated in a private room, opening off the offices of the firm in Lombard Street; a room in which big loans had been negotiated, and contracts of world-wide importance had been signed and sealed; a room, too, to which others beside Clive were in the habit of resorting in times of perplexity for wisdom and counsel from the successful financier.

For Joshua Redway had a great reputation for shrewdness and clear-headedness not only within but beyond the limits of his home circle; and when Clive had asked Lord Culvers's permission to take his father into his confidence respecting Ida's strange disappearance, the permission was not only readily granted, but Lord Culvers had added that counsel from Mr. Redway at such a juncture would be most highly esteemed by him.

Three days had passed since the wedding. No letter had been received from the missing girl, nor had tidings of her reached her people from any quarter.

The Culvers's family had returned to town, and had resumed the even tenor of their way; or, perhaps it would be more correct to say "the busy tenor of their way," for the London season was in full swing, and the Culvers family were, as the phrase goes, "very much in the vortex."

Clive answered his father's question with another.

"Do you not think that the Culvers's,

one and all, take the matter very coolly?" he asked.

"I do. So far, however, as Lord Culvers is concerned, I'm not surprised. Do you remember the fire at the back of his house in Belgrave Square?"

The incident alluded to had exhibited Lord Culvers in a most characteristic light. Two or three frightened servants had rushed into his room in the dead of night, exclaiming, "A fire, my lord, in the mews at the back of the house; pray get up." "A fire," Lord Culvers had repeated, calmly, without opening his eyes; "well, I dare say it will go out again," and he had turned over on his other side to finish his night's rest.

"The impression in the house seems to be," continued Clive, "that Juliet knows more than she feels inclined to tell."

"Can't you induce her to speak?"

"Not about Ida; although she'll talk by the hour about the brute Ida has married."

The father for a moment looked keenly at his son.

"Let me see," he said, after a moment's pause, "you are not taking up this matter out of friendship to Captain Culvers?"

"Good heavens, no!" cried Clive, hotly. "I've not spoken to the man half-a-dozen times in my life."

"Then I suppose it is because she is Juliet's sister that you have thus thrown yourself heart and soul into the affair?"

There came no reply from Clive. His face flushed crimson. His lips tightened.

Mr. Redway's eyes did not lift from his face.

"Clive," he said, after waiting in vain for an answer, "you are only giving me a half confidence. Why did you not marry this girl yourself?"

Then Clive's words came in a torrent.

"Because," he said, passionately, "she would have nothing to do with me—treated me as if I were something too vile for her to notice. When I went into a room she would walk out of it; if I joined a game of tennis in which she was playing she would immediately lay down her racket; she would not even dance in a set in which I should have been her vis-à-vis, and have had to touch her hand."

The father looked his surprise.

He was a tall, handsome man, with a fine head, and eyes that pierced like an eagle's. He drew his brows over them, and thought for awhile, giving Clive time to cool down.

"Had she always treated you in that fashion?" he presently asked.

"No," said Clive, bitterly, "when I was first introduced to her at the Gordons', where we were both staying, she seemed to—to like me; at least, I thought so. Then Juliet joined her there, and everything at once seemed changed."

"Ah-h, Juliet. I suppose you quickly transferred your devotion from one sister to the other."

"I scarcely know how it came about," said Clive, miserably. "Juliet was so kind and sympathetic, Ida so strange and cold; and they were so much alike in their faces and their ways! Sometimes when I was talking to Juliet I could fancy she was Ida! And then before I well knew how far I had gone, the thing was done."

"Ah-h, and then Ida rushes off to Florence to study art; you go to the Cape on a mission for me; Captain Culvers comes upon the scene and flirts with Juliet; home rushes Ida, and throws herself once more into the breach, marries her cousin; and Juliet is kept true to her absent lover. Then, having married a man for whom possibly she had neither liking nor esteem, she finds it impossible to carry her self-sacrifice farther, and so takes sudden flight. Clive, there is my solution to the whole mystery."

And Clive, with eyes opened too late, had the conviction forced upon him that this solution was most probably the true one.

Ida's devotion to Juliet had never been open to doubt, and she had sealed that devotion by giving up her lover in the first instance to the sister's whim. Then when a lover less worthy had come upon the scene, and Juliet's fancy had seemed to waver, she had put the question of the capricious girl's happiness beyond a doubt by another act of self-sacrifice—a marriage with the less desirable suitor who might otherwise have fallen to Juliet's lot. Read in this light, the wedding at the church where the funeral service had been read over her dead mother, the laying of her bridal flowers on that mother's grave, could be easily understood.

Clive groaned aloud.

"What a fool—a miserable fool I have been!" he exclaimed, clenching his fingers into the palm of his hand. "I could blow my brains out!"

"In your love affairs I'll admit they've been of very little use to you," said his father, drily.

Then there fell a pause, during which the father's heart must have ached for the look of dumb, hopeless misery which settled on his son's face.

"If I could only know that she is safe and well, I should ask nothing more," said Clive, presently, in a voice that matched his face.

Assuredly at the moment news of her health and safety compassed the whole of his desires. He could not have framed his lips to the prayer that she might return and be planted in Captain Culvers's home as his wife.

Mr. Redway did not heed the remark; absorbed in thought, he leaned his head upon his hand.

"The only objection," he said, slowly, after awhile, "that I can see to my version of the affair, is that it is too simple a reading of the mystery. In real life, as a rule, the solutions to mysteries are nearly as mysterious as the thing itself. Human motives and feelings are so complex, that when they are revealed to us, it is often difficult to believe that they stand to action in the relation of cause to effect. And when a woman's motives and feelings are concerned, the whole thing becomes a thousand times more complex."

"But no other solution presents itself; I wish to Heaven it did!" said Clive, passionately.

"Lord Culvers appears to be without ideas or theories on the matter!"

"Absolutely. His one endeavour is to keep the matter quiet till Ida writes. I've begged him again and again to let me run over to Florence to question Madame Verdi—the lady with whom Ida stayed when there—as to whether she knows anything of Ida's movements. But no! he will not have the affair made public. He says Ida will be sure to write in a day or so."

"Her promise to write may have been only a blind to keep them all quiet while she arranged her plans."

"Exactly; and meanwhile we are losing precious time. And as for hushing the matter up, the thing will soon be impossible. Already people are beginning to talk. I was asked only this morning if it were true that Ida and Culvers had quarrelled on their wedding tour, and that Ida had returned to her home. I dare say the servants have set the wildest stories afloat."

"What is Juliet's theory? Of course, if my solution of the mystery is correct, it is

impossible to believe that Juliet knows any more than we do."

"Juliet is altogether an enigma to me. To all appearance she takes the matter as calmly as her father."

"And you say you have cross-questioned her yourself?"

"Tried to. But you might as well try to cross-question the wind or the waves as Juliet when she has a mind to be silent. With all her salety and capriciousness, she can keep a secret if she is so disposed. I know perfectly well if Ida had tied her down with any promises, there's no power on earth would make her break them. Those sisters are loyal to each other to an altogether remarkable degree."

"Did you ask her, as I suggested, what jewellery her sister was wearing when she left home?"

"I did so this morning. She is not at all sure what rings Ida was wearing; but she knows for certain that she had on the diamond hawk brooch that had been her mother's, for she saw her fasten the band of her dress with it under her shoulder-cape when she changed her dress for travelling."

"Ah-h, that's something to note!"

"I should think so," said Clive, gloomily; "there are over fifty diamonds in that brooch. It must be worth several thousands; and, if Ida is so disposed, would give her the means of roaming the world and keeping us all in suspense for goodness knows how long."

"And gives, also, her friends the means of tracing her. No woman could wear such a brooch as that without attracting attention, let alone attempt to raise money on it. Take my advice, Clive: get Lord Culvers's permission, and run out advertisements and handbills for that brooch without a moment's delay; of course offering a suitable reward for it. Where that brooch is, there is Ida. If we get news of the one we get news of the other."

CHAPTER V.

LORD CULVERS did not offer any opposition to Mr. Redway's suggestion. Off and on the girls lost a good many articles of jewellery in the course of a year, and an advertisement more or less, for one of their brooches, would not be likely to attract much attention among their friends. So, on the day after Clive's consultation with his father, the following advertise-

ment appeared in the leading London and provincial journals :

"Five hundred pounds reward will be paid for information that will lead to the recovery of a diamond brooch, missing from a lady's jewel-case. It is formed as a hawk with outstretched wings, holding in its beak a spray of emeralds. The eyes are composed of two large rubies.

"Information to be given to Messrs. Hunt and Locke, Chancery Lane, London."

The Messrs. Hunt and Locke thus mentioned were not Lord Culvers's family lawyers, but a firm of solicitors noted for their successful conduct of complicated criminal cases.

Simultaneously with its publication in the London newspapers, the advertisement appeared in the principal Continental journals.

Captain Culvers, lounging over his breakfast and matutinal cigar, in his rooms in a quiet street in an unfashionable quarter of Paris, had his eye caught by it.

This visit of his to the gay capital did not promise to be either a pleasant or a profitable one to him. It was beyond measure irksome to him to shun all possible rendezvous of his countrymen of his own social standing ; to remain within doors the greater part of the day, and to issue forth only when the fashionable world, to which, of right, he held entrée, were safely shut in at their dinners, their opera, or their balls. Yet this was what circumstances compelled him to, unless he was prepared to run the gauntlet of all sorts of questions and conjectures respecting his private affairs and sudden change of plans.

Society, to a man of his temperament, is as absolute a necessity as his cigar and his game of baccarat. He was consequently driven to seek it in haunts and among associates of a lower grade. He thus became once more the habitué of a sporting, drinking, card-playing set, that, in view of his approaching marriage, he had vowed should know him no more.

He read the advertisement offering the large reward for Ida's brooch with an anxious, startled look on his face.

"The fools!" he muttered. "Who has set going this piece of folly! It must be put a stop to without a moment's delay."

He went at once to his writing-table; but the letter which he there set himself to write was not finished without many a pause to his pen and much careful thought.

Eventually it ran thus :

"Rue Vervien, 15.

"MY DEAR UNCLE, — I have this moment read your advertisement offering a reward for Ida's brooch. At least, I judge it to be yours from the description of the brooch, which I recognise as one that Ida was very fond of wearing. Will you mind my asking you if you are quite sure she had it on when she left home with me? I saw nothing of it." This was underlined. "Are you acting upon information given you by Juliet? If so, may I ask whether her statement is confirmed by Ida's maid? If this is not the case, pardon me if I say that I think you are being misled to follow a wrong scent. Take my word for it, Juliet knows more than any of us"—this was also underlined—"and my belief is that if you concentrate attention on her you'll come upon traces of Ida far sooner than by offering rewards for a brooch which may possibly be all the time safely hidden in a young lady's jewel-case. I beg of you at once to withdraw the advertisement, whose only result may be to lead us a long way out of our road and land us in the mire at last.

"Your affectionate Nephew,

"SEFTON CULVERS."

This letter, as ill-luck would have it, fell into Juliet's hands before it reached her father's. Recognising the handwriting, she at once ran with it to her father's study.

"From Sefton, father; he may have something to tell us," she exclaimed, as she entered the room.

Lord Culvers, in spite of his repeated hourly assurances to his wife and daughter that "things" were bound to come right if they were only let alone, was far from feeling confident that his words would be verified, and would occasionally give way to those little outbursts of irritability to which placidly-disposed people are prone when the tranquil surface of their existence is broken.

"From Sefton—why wasn't it given me before?" he said, irritably. "I've waited in the whole morning for the post—now where are my glasses?"

Juliet picked up the glasses, and perched them on her own little, straight nose.

"Now, if you don't worry, I'll read it to you," she said, patronisingly. Then above the rims of the glasses, without pause or exclamation, she read aloud the letter from beginning to end.

Before Lord Culvers had time to pass comment upon it, she had torn it in

two, and tossed it into the waste-paper basket.

"That's the only place for such a letter as that," she said, taking off the spectacles, and looking at her father with flashing eyes. "Of course you won't dream of replying to it, will you, father!" She spoke very slowly, her small lips tightening, her head very high in the air.

"Eh, what, my dear!" said Lord Culvers, turning round in his chair and facing her. "I've hardly taken in what he says. I should like to have read the letter once again."

"I'll repeat to you what he says," said Juliet, in the same slow, quiet tones as before; "he says you are to get a maid—a maid, do you understand, to confirm my words before you believe them. He advises you to set a watch on your daughter—some one, I suppose, to follow her about and peep into her letters—and asks you to take his word—his word after doubting mine—that I know more than I choose to tell!"

"Eh, my dear, are you quite sure he meant it to be taken that way!" asked Lord Culvers.

He sighed wearily.

"It's such a painful affair! Why—why doesn't Ida send us a line and end our suspense?" He broke off again, then looking full into Juliet's face as if hoping there to read confirmation to his words, he added: "No, no, my dear; I don't believe that you are keeping anything back from me—you couldn't be so heartless and cruel."

But it was said a little dubiously.

"May I come in?" said a voice at that moment. Then, without waiting for a reply, the door opened, and Olive Redway entered in the easy, familiar way which his relations with the Culvers family warranted.

"I've come once more to beg permission to start for Florence," he began, and then broke off abruptly, looking from Juliet to Lord Culvers, from Lord Culvers to Juliet, the faces of both so evidently bearing the marks of a disturbing subject of thought.

Juliet was the first to explain: "A letter has come from Sefton—there it is in fragments in the waste-paper basket—and I am accused by him of knowing more than I have told about Ida and her movements. It's true in one way, I do know more than I have told about Ida—and about Sefton also. I could, if I had chosen, have told you things that would have startled you."

"Eh, what?" cried Lord Culvers, looking scared.

"I mean it. I could have told you that he and Ida had some desperate quarrels. Once Ida told him to his face that she hated him—at least he told me so, and begged me to make peace between them. I made things straight, and then Ida to seal their reconciliation paid off his debts—all, at least, that he told her of."

"Paid his debts!" echoed Lord Culvers, his face showing simple blank astonishment.

"Yes," continued Juliet. "Do you remember three months back you paid Ida a good deal of money—dividends or something or other—and told her she had better collect her bills in and pay them? Very well, those bills are still unpaid; every penny of that money went to Sefton."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes. Ida rolled the bank-notes up into a ball, and they played tennis with it one afternoon. She won the game, and then tossed the ball over to him as she left the ground—I can see her now—just as you would toss a ball to a lap-dog."

All this time Olive had been standing a little apart, his face growing whiter and whiter, his brow knotting into an ugly frown. Now he advanced a step, and laid his hand on Juliet's arm.

"And you let your sister marry such a man as that—without a word of remonstrance," he said, in a low, constrained tone.

Juliet felt herself now on the defensive all round. She held her head very high, half-closed her eyes, and her face slightly—very slightly—flushed.

"Without a word of remonstrance!" she repeated. "Off and on Ida and I had a good many words about Sefton, though whether they were words of remonstrance is another thing. You see I liked him—I dare say it was very absurd of me, but I did like him, and more than once I said to Ida, 'What a pity it is you and I cannot change places, and you marry Clive, and I marry Sefton!'" This was meant as a counter-thrust; but it didn't strike quite as she meant it should.

"I wish to Heaven——" broke in Clive, hotly. Then he checked himself, biting his lip to keep back words that would have fallen with evil grace upon the ear of his betrothed.

Lord Culvers rose excitedly from his chair.

"It's too much! Too much!" he ex-

claimed, in a piteous tone. "Why, why is all this told me now when I am absolutely powerless to remedy the evil? Gracious Heaven! what have I done that my life should be filled with turmoil from year's end to year's end?"

As if magnetically drawn to it, he finished his sentence with his eyes uplifted to a picture hanging over the mantelpiece.

It was that of the first Lady Culvers. One glance at it sufficiently answered the question what he had done that his life should be filled with turmoil and worry. The beautiful eyes and mouth, the very turn of the head, the droop of the eyelid, the crisp, curly hair, expressed in every line and tint the vivacity, waywardness, and love of fun which in Ida and Juliet had fascinated their friends and lovers, and had made their father's life off and on a burthen to him.

Juliet did not heed her father's outburst. She remained standing facing Clive, and, narrowing her eyes, steadily surveyed him.

"It is very good of you to show so much interest in Ida and her affairs," she said, sarcastically; "but I do think a journey to Florence to cross-question Madame Verdi will be a work of supererogation. You had far better run over to Paris and keep your eye on my cousin Sefton."

"What makes you say that?" asked Clive, curtly, peremptorily.

Her words struck a sudden and most painful key-note to his mind. Was it possible that Ida's disappearance was the result of some prearranged plan between herself and Sefton, and that the latter, after all, had but acted the part of a forlorn bridegroom? Did Juliet know of any circumstances that gave warrant to such a supposition, or was she merely speaking as she often did—at random?

Or was it possible that this enigmatical girl, after all, was seeking to divert suspicion from herself by throwing it upon Sefton, and thus pay him back with interest for the insult he had offered her in his letter?

From his knowledge of Juliet's character the last supposition seemed the most feasible.

He carefully watched her face as he waited for his answer.

But the piquant, girlish countenance was as unreadable as the massive, stone-cut features of the great Sphinx itself.

She only slightly curled her lip.

"From what I have told you of the footing on which Ida and Sefton stood to each other, you can form your own opinion on the matter," she answered, calmly.

Lord Culvers laid his hand upon her shoulder.

"Juliet," he said, "you are driving me to the verge of distraction with your hints and prevarications."

Clive's temper gave way utterly.

"It is simply your duty," he said, hotly. "You are bound to speak out—to tell everything, small or great, that you know of Ida's possible intentions."

Juliet kept her coolness still.

"If I don't know anything of her intentions I can't speak out, as you call it," she answered, in perfectly level tones. "And supposing I did know more than I have said, and Ida had not given me permission to speak, not you, not my father—no, not wild horses, even, should drag it out of me!"

CHAPTER VI.

CLIVE obtained a reluctant permission from Lord Culvers, and set off for Florence, to interrogate, under a seal of secrecy, Madame Verdi as to her possible knowledge of Ida's movements.

It must be admitted that his hopes did not rise very high as to the results of his journey. Nothing better, however, at the moment presented itself, so it seemed a thing to be done.

Lord Culvers multiplied injunctions to the young man as to caution and secrecy.

"You'll bear in mind," finally he said, by way of summing up his hundred-and-one instructions, "that Ida may write at any moment. If not this week, next week, perhaps, or the week after. And I don't want tongues set going in Florence, any more than in London, over my daughter's eccentricities, and so increase difficulties in the way of her return to her husband. Heaven knows, it's bad enough to endure such wild whims, without having all the world talking about them."

His powers of endurance were, however, to be still farther taxed. Clive was no sooner out of sight, so to speak, than another "wild whim," as Lord Culvers phrased it, was started—this time by Juliet.

With the season at its height, with her

card-rack literally stuffed with engagements, and with Goodwood as yet in the far distance, the young lady suddenly made the announcement that London was stifling, simply unendurable, and that she thought it would be heavenly to throw over all engagements and get back to Dering at once.

Exclamations from father and step-mother greeted her announcement. The former immediately rose and quitted the room, knowing that a "battle-royal" between his wife and Juliet was bound to ensue.

He was right. The "battle-royal" in this instance lasted about twenty minutes. Lady Culvers retired from the contest with a very red face and vibrating with excitement; while Juliet, calm and cool as ever, went up to her room, rang the bell for her maid, and in a tranquil tone gave many and minute directions as to the packing of her wardrobe, and the "things" to be supplied to it before she left town.

"We shall leave in a day or two, without doubt," she added; "for whenever I set my mind upon a thing it invariably comes to pass."

Assuredly the maid knew that well enough, as also did every member of Lord Culvers's household.

It must be admitted that Fortune, in her dealings with Lord Culvers, had justified her reputation of never coming with both hands full. With one hand she had bestowed upon him health, wealth, and a placid temper; with the other she had filled his life with worries and anxieties from year's end to year's end.

Perhaps, however, if in addition to his easy, placid temperament, he had been endowed with an average amount of common-sense and an eye for character, one-half of his worries might have been spared him. His first wife had captivated him with her beauty and grace of manner, and he had married her without so much as a thought whether her disposition was likely to harmonise with his own; his second wife captivated him with a smooth tongue and a sympathetic manner, and he married her without a thought as to her capability of doing that of which he felt himself incapable—controlling his wayward, wilful young daughters.

It was true that Miss Pigott had remained longer than any other of the governesses who, in a quick succession, had tried and failed to "govern" the

young ladies; but he did not set his mind to account for the circumstance, and so failed to discover that the secret of Miss Pigott's success with them lay in the fact that she never openly opposed any piece of folly they might plan, although privately, to their father, she might condemn it vigorously.

Miss Pigott was a wise woman in her generation; she had come into Lord Culvers's house with the intention of remaining in it, and had steered her course accordingly. She had easily read the characters of her pupils, and had found out that, although they were quick-tempered and self-willed, they were good-hearted and generous; that, though they might nearly worry the life out of her one day with their vagaries, they would do their best to make atonement the next by loading her with presents and kindnesses—provided always they were allowed full license to carry out every whim that came into their heads. With this secret in her hands, she quickly saw her way to an easy life and a good income; and when, later on, by dint of soft words and a sympathetic manner, she succeeded in ingratiating herself into Lord Culvers's favour to the extent of becoming his confidante on all matters relating to his daughters, she saw her way to something else beside a good income—an assured position as Lord Culvers's wife.

In age she was about forty-five, in appearance she was short and stout, with a red face, and a quantity of white hair, which she piled on top of her head—a la Marie Antoinette—in order to increase her height. Ida and Juliet would as soon have thought of looking for their future stepmother in one of the maids of the household as in their useful "Peggy." So it came about that while they were alternately worrying and caressing her, and in all respects, as they imagined, turning her round their little fingers, she was stealing a march on them, and saying to herself: "By-and-by the tables shall be turned, and all debts be paid off with interest."

When, however, after a certain ceremony in a certain West End church, the tables were turned, and she began the attempt to pay off her debts, she found it was not quite so easy a task as she had anticipated. Ida and Juliet, individually, were a host in themselves; combined, they appeared to be invincible. They always seemed to be on the alert, and any attempt of hers to assert herself, or to stand on

her dignity, was promptly nipped in the bud. They would allow her to spend an hour or so dally with the housekeeper, and to regulate generally the household routine, because that had been her province as Miss Pigott in the days of her general usefulness. When, however, it came to the issuing or accepting of invitations, the family exits from town or country houses, the annual visits to the moors, or to the sea, they simply ignored her, carried their wishes, or, rather, their commands, as of old to their father, bent him to their will as easily as one can bend a willow wand, and poor "Peggy," whether she liked it or not, was obliged to follow their lead.

And they did it all so lightly and easily, without so much as a flushed face or a heightened voice. She, poor soul! with much travail of thought, and many a sleepless night, would concoct some elaborate plan for self-assertion, and the girls, with a little curl of their lips, a little arching of their brows, and some quick, bright speech, would bring it all to nought in a moment, and she would think herself fortunate if she were allowed to acknowledge her defeat, and withdraw from the scene without having been made to look foolish before a roomful of people.

It was all in vain for her to appeal to her husband. Alone with her he would be sympathetic, and vow that his authority should support hers. Brought face to face with his daughters, however, he would at once surrender mutely, and then get out of the way as quickly as possible.

The chances were that Miss Pigott would never have become Lady Culvers if Ida and Juliet had not, at their own request, gone without their chaperon on a three months' visit to friends in Ireland, thus giving their father time and opportunity not only to woo and to win his bride, but also absolutely to fix his wedding-day without let or hindrance.

CHAPTER VII.

"O wild western light in a winter's sky,
I have watched your radiance flame and die,"

read Arthur Glynde, in the impassioned tone which poets, as a rule, reserve for their own productions.

Juliet held up her hand.

"No," she said, languidly, "I can't realise a winter's sky on this sultry morning. Besides, Peggy and I have just had—well, a passage of arms, call it, and your second

line too painfully recalls Peggy's face a moment ago."

The two were seated in Lord Culvers's study, a quiet, cool room, at the back of the house, where they were not likely to be disturbed by untimely callers.

These tête-à-têtes with the young poet had, in a measure, been forced upon Juliet. With that craving for an audience which goes hand in hand with authorship, he had come to the house early one morning with a roll of manuscript under his arm, and, taking Lord Culvers by surprise, had asked permission to read to him "a stanza or two," as he was anxious for the opinion of a competent critic as to whether the poems were worthy of publication.

Lord Culvers had listened patiently for twenty minutes, then he had recollected an engagement.

"Excuse me, Glynde," he had said, noting that the packet of manuscript was far from exhausted, "if you don't mind, I'll send Juliet to hear the remainder. She is a much better critic than I am—reads Browning, you know—and her opinion will be worth having."

Arthur Glynde did not demur to the change of audience, and from that day forward, whenever he made his appearance with a few quarto sheets under his arm, Lord Culvers invariably found that he had a pressing engagement, and resigned his easy-chair to Juliet.

Notwithstanding his poetic tendencies, Arthur Glynde was a very general favourite on account of his happy, genial temper. In appearance he was fair and the reverse of robust. His skin was white as a girl's, and he had the large, dreamy, changeful grey eye of the poet. His voice in speaking was soft, low, pathetic.

He laid down his manuscript at Juliet's behest with a little sigh. He would so much have preferred in fancy to watch a winter's sunset "flame and die," than to conjure up the image of the commonplace "Peggy."

"You came off victorious, I hope!" he presently asked.

"That goes without saying," answered Juliet. "It was all about a letter of mine. Peggy has been at her old tricks of opening letters—by mistake, of course. 'The Hon. Juliet Culvers' on the back of an envelope could so easily be mistaken for 'Lady Culvers,' could it not?"

And then she went on to relate a little scene that, in one form or another, must

have been of daily occurrence in the Culvers household. She had come down late that morning, and on seating herself at the breakfast-table, had seen in Lady Culvers's hand a letter in the writing of a girl friend—one of those "greatest friends of Ida's" whose intimacy the stepmother would have fain put an end to. Before, however, Juliet had time to claim her property, Lady Culvers, with a sweet and very humble apology, had handed the letter to her, saying that she had mistaken it for one of her own.

"It's a mistake that has occurred before, Peggy, and that I beg will not happen again, or the consequences will be serious," Juliet had replied, in lofty, stately fashion.

Upon this Lord Culvers very mildly had expressed a wish that Juliet would cease to address her stepmother by the obnoxious nickname.

"Doesn't she like it?" Juliet had said, half closing her eyes, and surveying Lady Culvers. "Then I'll address her as Margaret, it'll do just as well—it'll suggest the other name to her mind."

A threat which the young lady had not hesitated to put into execution.

"I think, after all," she continued to Arthur Glynde as she finished her narration, "pussy would be a far more appropriate nickname—she is so emphatically of the cat tribe. Don't you know 'The velvet paw, and the hidden claw'? Oh, how stifling it is this morning—please give me that fan."

Arthur did not give her the fan; he preferred to retain it, and save her the trouble of using it.

Juliet smiled up at him as he bent over the capacious and very easy chair in which she reclined.

"Thank you, that is delightful. Now if I had asked Clive to hand me a fan, he'd have done it—nothing more. It would never have occurred to him to save me the trouble of using it."

This was dangerous ground to take with a man who would have given ten years off his life to stand in Clive's shoes.

But dangerous ground had always a strong attraction for Juliet.

Arthur's face changed, his arm fell to his side.

"That man has more luck than he deserves," he said, in a low tone.

"I don't think he appreciates his luck either, and sometimes I think I'll take it away from him," she said, drooping her full

white lids till the shadow of her long lashes fell upon her cheek.

"And bestow it upon another man!" cried Arthur. And then before she could realise what was coming, he was down on his knees beside her with a passionate declaration of love on his lips.

Possibly, however, if she had known what was coming, she would have made no effort to prevent it. She took his protestations and despairing entreaties very calmly.

"Please get up off your knees," she said; "the words were no sooner out of my mouth than I regretted them. After all, I prefer being engaged to Olive!"

Arthur rose from his knees ruefully. He folded his arms, and stood a little distance off looking down on her; his fair, boyish features telling only too plainly his tale of love and disappointment.

Juliet smiled up at him again.

"Oh, don't look so rueful—there's a bright side to everything," she said, cheerily.

"A bright side to this!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. Don't you see so long as I'm engaged to Olive I want to marry some one else! But the chances are, if I broke off my engagement with him, that I should immediately fall in love with him all over again. Oh, no! Pray—pray don't go down on the carpet again."

In order the more effectually to prevent such a catastrophe, she left her chair, and walked away to the window. It opened over a miniature rockery planted with ferns and sweet-scented flowers. She plucked a spray of hellotrope, and began toying with it.

"Clive has never said to me one-quarter of the sweet things that you said just now," she said, softly, meditatively.

Arthur abruptly turned his back on her, and, as if afraid to venture once more within range of her coquetries, looked for his hat and made for the door.

"There's not a man living who could stand it," he muttered, almost fiercely.

"You've left your 'Wild Western Light' under the table," she said, not moving from her place at the window.

He stooped to gather the loose sheets of manuscript which, in his ardour, he had let fall.

"Arthur," she said, in a low, persuasive tone, "are you in a great hurry to go? I wanted to ask you to do something for me."

Down went the loose sheets of manu-

script to the floor once more, and back to her side he went in a moment.

"Do something for you!" he exclaimed. "What is there I would not do! You know I would lay down my life for you any hour, any day!"

"Oh, it's nothing half so bad as that," she answered, smilingly; "I wouldn't trouble you at all if I had a brother, or a cousin, or any one of whom I could ask a favour."

She seemed utterly to ignore the fact that she had a betrothed lover.

Arthur reminded her of it.

"You forget," he said, bitterly, "the man who doesn't appreciate his good luck, and who doesn't know how to say sweet things to you."

"Olive, do you mean! Oh, it's something I couldn't possibly ask him to do."

Arthur's face flushed with a real happiness. For the moment he felt himself exalted on a pinnacle to which his rival had never attained.

Only for a moment, however. Juliet knew how to read the light of pride in his eyes, and forthwith set herself to quench it.

"I ought to apologise for troubling you in this way," she said, sweetly; "but since Stacy—she was my maid for ever so many years, you know—married, there is no one I can ask to do anything for me."

The flush of happiness died out of his face. So then, after all, he only stood on a level with Stacy, the maid, in his goddess's estimation. He drew just one step nearer to her.

"Juliet," he said, in low, pained tones, "if you were not so exquisitely, so daintily beautiful, I could find it in my heart to say bitter things to you."

He was right in his estimation of her beauty. She was lovely, with a grace that might well be called exquisite and dainty. To his fancy, as he stood there facing her, the exquisiteness and daintiness had never been more markedly apparent.

She was dressed in some light summer robe of the palest possible shade of mother-of-pearl green, a shade that threw into vivid relief the delicate colouring of her skin, the warm brown of her hair so tightly coiled around her small head. The upper panes of the window at which she stood were filled in with a mosaic of painted glass, whose varied tints the quivering morning sunlight threw like a changeful rainbow about her light draperies, and on the ground at her feet.

She gave a little sigh.

"I suppose, then, I am to understand that you would rather not be troubled with my requests?" she presently said.

He did not at once reply. He was still feasting his eyes on her loveliness, enjoying the beauty of lines and tints in a manner possible only to an artist or a poet.

"Your name by rights should have been Iris," he said, at length, under his breath, and almost solemnly.

And forthwith his muse awakened, and began to sing in his ears some wonderful invocation to the rainbow messenger of the gods, which no doubt, in due course, would take its form in the orthodox iambs.

Juliet had to repeat her question before she could get it answered.

"Refuse!" he exclaimed. "Refuse you anything! Talk of the sea refusing to follow the moon before you talk of my refusing request of yours."

"Oh, but there's nothing half so complicated as tides and moons about what I want done," said the girl, with a light laugh. "I only want an advertisement inserted in all the English and Continental papers—all the papers, that is, that ladies and gentlemen would be likely to read."

The young man looked his astonishment. Then, recollecting the reputation which Juliet and Ida had for careless custody of their brooches and bracelets, asked:

"Is it emeralds or diamonds this time?"

"Neither," answered Juliet. "And you must not ask me a single question. And, above all, you mustn't let a single person know—no, not even your own mother—that either you or I have had anything to do with the advertisement. Promise me."

"I promise a thousand times over. You may rely on me as you might——" He paused a moment, and then added, with as much of sarcastic bitterness as he was capable of levelling at his goddess: "On your maid Stacy."

"Ah, you don't know how much that says," said Juliet, in no wise disconcerted. "Stacy was true as steel, and"—this added with a little laugh—"pliable as whalebone."

"I'll try and be the steel and whalebone combined," he said, taking up his hat, as if ready to depart that very minute.

"Oh, please wait," she exclaimed; "there's no such hurry; I don't want it inserted to-day, or to-morrow, but on the very day we leave town. I suppose you know that we go to Dering at the beginning of next week!"

Into the dim distance at once vanished all the pleasant meetings with his divinity at balls and theatres, dinners and garden-parties, which he was wont to say were his daily manna while he sojourned in the wilderness.

"Yes, I've teased father into it; I knew I should if I persevered. Peggy was furious at first—I knew it, because her manner grew so alarmingly sweet and insinuating; but it was all of no use. I told father that everything had lost its charm since Ida had married, that I was pining for country air, and, finally, that my boxes were packed, and that if they didn't come with me I should start off by myself. That made them give in at once. I think they had visions of my turning the Hall upside down in their absence, inaugurating tennis-parties without chaperons, and so forth."

"The beginning of next week!" was all that he could find to say, in a tone almost comic from its overweight of pathos.

"Yes. And the very day we leave town I want my advertisement to appear. Pray, pray don't forget! It is most important. Yes, I know I haven't told you yet what the advertisement is to be. I'll write it down, so that there'll be no mistake."

She went to her father's writing-table, and wrote on the back of an envelope just five words, which she handed to him.

Those five words were:

"Sub signo et sub rosa."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "beginning of next week" saw Clive on his way back from Florence, and Lord Culvers and his family comfortably settled in their country house; but it brought never a word of tidings of or from the missing bride.

There could be no doubt about it, Lord Culvers was beginning to get seriously uneasy; his geniality of manner appeared to be departing from him; he began to grow allent and abstracted; he would fall occasionally into deep reveries, from which he would awaken with a start, and give short, sharp answers to any one who chanced to address him.

Juliet also seemed to be losing a little of her brightness. During the last few days of their stay in town, she had taken interest in nothing save the preparations for their departure.

If the truth were told, their leaving town, after all, came as something of a relief to Lord Culvers. Wild and unreasonable as Juliet's proposal had at first seemed to him, he was at heart uncommonly glad to get away from the embarrassing enquiries of a large circle of friends as to the bride and bridegroom, who were supposed to be at that moment at the height of their felicity among the Alpine lakes and mountains.

On the morning after their arrival at Dering, a letter was received from Clive, which told that his journey to Florence had been a lost one, Madame Verdi having neither seen nor heard of Ida, and knowing nothing whatever of her intentions.

The letter, although addressed to Juliet, was brief and formal in tone, decidedly not the sort of missive that a betrothed damsel would read in an ecstasy of smiles and tears, carry about with her all day long, and hide under her pillow at night.

Neither its brevity nor its formality, however, seemed to trouble Juliet. She took it at once to her father, and read it aloud to him, word for word. There was added a postscript to the letter, in which Clive said that, mindful of a certain suggestion of hers, he intended to break his return journey at Paris, and would be glad if she would send to him at the Hotel Bristol the present address of her cousin, Captain Culvers.

"What has he got into his head now!" said Lord Culvers, irritably, turning to his daughter. "Juliet, take my word for it, if those two men meet, mischief will come of it. What could have possessed you to make such a foolish suggestion?"

It was beginning to dawn upon him that Clive was throwing, not too much energy, but energy of not quite the right kind into his search for Ida.

"Dear love, is it possible that such a suggestion came from you?" said Lady Culvers, looking up from her embroidery-frame, and throwing a glance at her husband, which said, plainly enough, "Oh, these girls, when will they cease to get us into hot water!"

Juliet narrowed her eyes and looked at her. Then, with polite circumlocution, told her to mind her own business.

"Embroidery, Peggy," she said, "requires an undivided attention. Otherwise you will be turning your daisies into dandelions."

Then, before "Peggy" could recover herself, or her father find words in which to mark his sense of her employment of the objectionable nickname, the girl had taken her hat from a side table and had wandered out into the garden, through one of the open French windows.

"Don't expect me back till luncheon," she said to her father, as she passed. "I'm going to have a long talk with Goody."

This was said by way of adding fuel to fire.

"Goody," or, to call her by her right name, Margaret Pearson, had been in her young days nurse to the first Lady Culvers, and subsequently had officiated in the same capacity to Lady Culvers's twin daughters. Her devotion to her mistress and to her mistress's children had known no limit. The latter, so to speak, had never grown out of her care. When they quitted the nursery for the school-room, she had acted guardian-angel to them still; and woe to the governess who was rash enough to assert her authority against "Goody's."

She could never bring herself to forgive Lord Culvers for his second marriage; and when the new Lady Culvers wished to take the management of affairs entirely into her own hands, it became necessary to find a cottage for Goody, and to pension her off. Otherwise, the house would have been kept in an even worse state of ferment than it actually was, for the girls espoused Goody's cause heartily, and thoroughly enjoyed playing the champion to her at their stepmother's expense.

They were in the habit of styling Goody's cottage "The Sanctuary," and their "refuge in times of persecution." That meant that to Goody were carried reports of their skirmishes and their victories, their flirtations and their love-affairs, in the full assurance that all would be viewed with eyes that could not see fault or folly in her darling nurslings.

Juliet had a pleasant half-mile down shady lanes to go before she could reach her "sanctuary" that morning.

A quaint, pretty little cottage it was, with a great, glorious tea-rose smothering its porch, running riot up its red-brick front, and peeping, unrebuked, into every one of its diamond-paned windows. Sur-

rounding the cottage was a garden planted thick with old-fashioned flowers, where sweet-peas and mignonette mixed their fragrance with that of cabbage-roses and carnations, and tall sunflowers stood like sentinels on either side of the rose-covered porch.

A great, sleepy, black cat aroused itself from a bed of purple thyme, and came down the path to meet the young lady as she swung back the garden gate. From out the open cottage door came a bright-faced little country lass—Goody's great-niece—dragging by one arm a much-battered wooden doll; and following her came Goody herself, tall, trim, and comely, in lilac cotton gown, and white cap and kerchief.

The greeting between nurse and nursing was more than cordial—affectionate.

"No end to tell you, Goody. Let us go into your little parlour; it's too hot to talk out here," said Juliet, putting her arm within the old body's. "No, don't ask after Olive, he's out of favour now," she said, as she seated herself in the cool little room, as fragrant of flowers as the outside garden. "He has had his day, and his sun has set. By-and-by I shall talk to you about some one else; but not yet awhile. No, and you mustn't ask after Sefton—he's out of favour, too. I used to like him; but I hate—yes, hate him now. To-day I'm going to talk about Ida—no one but Ida from first to last."

This was tantamount to granting Goody license to ask any amount of questions upon a subject that lay very near her heart—"darling Miss Ida's wedding-day."

Juliet answered them every one in her liveliest fashion, and with many a little passing touch of humour at the expense of "Peggy," and some of "Peggy's" friends. Then she glanced at the little girl playing in a corner with her big wooden doll.

"Send her away, Goody," she whispered, "I've something very special to say to you now."

So the little one was sent into the garden, the cottage door was closely shut, and for nearly an hour Juliet held undisturbed conference with her humble friend.

Through the open window, however, there were borne now and again to the little girl, odd fragments of their talk.

"Ida and Sefton had a desperate quarrel over-night," once she heard Juliet say.

And as the child stood on tip-toes to peep at an Emperor butterfly which had settled on the great golden disc of a tall sunflower, there came to her the words from Juliet in a slightly contemptuous tone:

"Peggy has begun her old trick of peeping into my letters, and——"

But here Goody's voice interposed with, "Hush, my dearie, not so loud," and then Goody's hand showing amid the flowers on the sill closed the casement.

CHAPTER IX.

JULIET went sauntering home under the shadow of the high hedgerows, pink now with trailing wild rose, and half-opened buds of honeysuckle.

It was a delicious day, with sun enough to suggest the tropics, breeze enough to make one think of the Alps. The air seemed absolutely laden with flower-scents; a distant sharpening of a scythe, the far-away tinkling of a sheep-bell, were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the summer air.

Juliet had many subjects for thought that morning. A little absent-mindedly she turned the corner of a lane that led her at least a mile out of her way, and brought her back to the Hall by the park gates opening into the high-road.

A carriage and pair on the point of driving out pulled up at her approach.

"At last!" exclaimed a voice from out of the carriage. "You naughty child, where have you been?"

Juliet looked up to see a very tiny, very golden-haired, and very fashionably attired lady closing her sunshade, and extending a hand in greeting.

"Mrs. Glynde!" she exclaimed, "have you dropped out of the clouds? When, where, and how did you get here?"

"I caught the first train down this morning, arrived at Dering station three hours ago, called at the MacNamaras' on my way here, and they were good enough to let me have their carriage. No, I won't go back to the house; I'm sure your father and mother——"

"What?" exclaimed Juliet, making round eyes at her.

"Oh, I beg your pardon—your father and Lady Culvers, I mean—have had more than enough of my society; they have been entertaining me for the past hour and a half. If you don't mind I'll take a stroll round the park with you, I've something very special to tell you."

She alighted as she spoke.

Juliet led the way down a cool avenue where young lime-trees arched their boughs above, and tall bracken waved its graceful fronds on either side of a stretch of grassward, smooth and springy with its undergrowth of moss.

"I'm miserable, broken-hearted, desolate!" exclaimed Mrs. Glynde, so soon as she saw that she and Juliet had the solitude to themselves.

But whatever her misery and desolateness might have caused her to neglect, it assuredly was not her toilet. That suggested, alike in its elaborateness and finish, the most artistic of Parisian modistes, and the most skilful and assiduous of maids.

Mrs. Glynde's friends were thoroughly aware of the fact that at its lowest computation her age could not be far off fifty. Dress, however, and the use of toilet accessories, reduced it in appearance to about five-and-thirty.

"I could easily make myself look as young as she does, if I chose to spend a fortune on cosmetics," sometimes her friends would say ill-temperedly to their husbands.

"I would much rather you did not, my dear," those husbands as a rule would reply.

But, all the same, when the choice was offered to them, they generally preferred Mrs. Glynde's society to that of the more sober-minded matrons, for in conversation she was invariably lively and entertaining, and in manner sympathetic.

Juliet racked her brains to find out what could have broken Mrs. Glynde's heart.

"Let me think. You have seen some one in a bonnet that must have been 'created' in Paris at the same time as yours—twin-sister to it, in fact."

"Juliet, it's far worse than that. It's about Arthur."

"Oh-h! only touches you at second hand, then. He can't find a rhyme to some pet word of his, and he scorns to pilfer one, I suppose?"

"Cruel child! Do you think a trifle like that would have made me get up at six o'clock in the morning, and sent me flying down into the wilderness when I'm due to-day at a luncheon, a flower-show, a dinner, and a ball afterwards, at which the Royalties will be present? Give me credit for devotion to Arthur, if for nothing else."

"Oh, yes, I'll give you credit for

devotion to Arthur, and for a good many other things," answered Juliet, lightly, and with a side glance at the golden hair which appeared to have "Auricomus" written upon it.

"What sacrifice will not a mother make on behalf of a son, and an only son, like my Arthur!" continued the lady.

"What, indeed! Luncheons, flower-shows, dinners, balls, and Royalties included."

"Juliet, you have no heart. You are a second Lady Clara Vere de Vere, and I believe if my poor Arthur were going to commit suicide, you'd——"

"Hold your course without remorse, and slay him with a vacant stare, or something like that. But is he contemplating anything so terrible as bullets, or knives, or prussic acid?"

"Something quite as terrible. Only yesterday he came to me and announced his intention of joining an expedition to Central Africa. 'I have lost heart, I have lost hope!' he said. 'Something I must do to fill my life!'"

She ended her sentence with a heavy sigh.

"Oh-h, is that all he is going to do!" And Juliet drew a long breath that seemed to imply surprise and disappointment commingled.

"All! What could be worse?" cried Mrs. Glynde, despairingly.

"A great many things. Now if I were Mrs. Glynde, and Arthur were my son, I should feel that it would be a good deal worse if he had come to me and announced his intention of—well, going into Parliament, or of playing first violin in the Albert Hall orchestra, because I should know that in either case his intentions would be doomed to disappointment."

"Juliet!"

"I should, indeed. But a trip to Central Africa! Why, anybody can accomplish that. Is it a Gaze's or a Cook's excursion party?"

"You have a heart of stone! But I can't believe you understand me. This is an expedition got up by a number of dreadful men—the Harkers, the Ottleys, and that set—who have made up their minds to 'penetrate into the interior,' as they call it. That means go farther into the dreadful hole than anybody has ever yet gone, and get eaten up by flies, or cannibals, or lions——"

"Or ostriches, or monkeys. They all live in that part of the world, don't they?"

"Make as much fun as you like, Juliet; but, take my word for it, if Arthur goes out with these dreadful men, he'll never come back again."

"Well, but other people go, and come back again, and seem to like it rather than otherwise. I should enjoy a trip there myself. I think I'll get my future husband to promise to take me there for our wedding tour."

The last words were said with a side-glance at Mrs. Glynde to see their effect.

They acted like a match to tinder. Mrs. Glynde came to a sudden standstill on the smooth greensward, her face the colour of the scarlet sunshade she carried.

"Juliet," she said, excitedly, "that engagement is still 'on,' then? I hoped—I was told, that is, by friends of yours a day or two ago, that they felt confident it would all 'come to nothing'; one need only to see you and Mr. Redway together to make sure of it, they said."

Juliet flushed a little.

"Dear me! How good it is of people to take such an interest in my affairs! Will you kindly tell those friends of mine that I intend to be engaged to Clive Redway till——" She broke off for a moment, exclaiming: "Hark! Was that a cuckoo! What a belated little bird! Surely it's time it went back to Central Africa!"

"Juliet, finish what you were going to say," cried Mrs. Glynde, excitedly. "Till when do you mean to be engaged to Clive Redway? Can you fix a date for the ending of your engagement?"

"Why, of course—till my wedding-day, I was going to say," answered Juliet, coolly.

Whatever might be her opinion of Arthur Glynde, she had only one opinion of Arthur Glynde's mother. The little lady had a reputation, which Juliet was not inclined to gainsay, of being one of the cleverest match-makers that Society numbered in its ranks. She had married off in succession three penniless nieces to wealthy scions of aristocratic houses; and now she was spreading her toils to catch an heiress and a beauty for her son.

"How can one small head carry such a multiplicity of plots!" thought the girl, with a far-off memory of the parson of the "loveliest village of the plain."

"Till your wedding-day!" repeated Mrs. Glynde, slowly. "Then my poor Arthur has no chance!"

She felt for her pocket-handkerchief, and for a moment it went to her eyes.

With her handkerchief, however, she pulled from her pocket a half-sheet of paper. With a sudden movement she stooped and picked it up.

"You ought to see this, Juliet," she said, handing it to the girl. "I picked it up yesterday in Arthur's den; it speaks for itself. If you read it you'll see how deeply in earnest my poor boy is."

Juliet unfolded the half-sheet, and read as follows:

My love hath solemn eyes,
Eyes that would make you weep,
Bright with the light of stars
That midnight vigil keep.

My love hath soft, cool hands,
To smooth hot, aching brows,
Soft as a plumed breast,
Cooler than winter snows.

My love hath silent feet,
Silent as passing breath
Or sailing summer cloud;
My love's sweet name is—death.

Juliet folded and returned the half-sheet to Mrs. Glynde.

"Eyes, hands, feet! Now why did he leave out the finger-nails! Tell him to add another verse something like this:

My love hath inky nails,
Nails that would make you weep.

Oh, what a lovely parody could be made out of it!"

Mrs. Glynde, with a sigh, put the verses into her pocket again.

"I can see how it will end," she said, sadly. "My poor boy will go to Africa and never come back. You and I will say good-bye to him, and never see him again!"

"Oh, not at all," said Juliet, cheerfully. "If I go for my wedding-trip to Central Africa, we should be sure to meet—don't you know, just as Stanley and Livingstone met in the middle of the desert. And he'd exclaim 'Juliet,' and I should reply, 'I'm no longer to be called Juliet, but—' Ah! I wonder what my married name would be!"

Again Mrs. Glynde came to a standstill on the greensward.

"Why, you said only a minute ago that you intended to marry Mr. Redway."

"I said so!" exclaimed Juliet, her manner expressing the utmost of astonishment.

"You said your engagement to him would end only on your wedding-day!"

"Ah, yes, that's another thing. I mean to be engaged to him till the very last moment, and then I shall be sure to marry—some one else. I couldn't endure

being engaged to the man I meant to marry."

Mrs. Glynde's face grew radiant.

"Ah, I see! I understand! Juliet, you are one of the most enigmatic of girls; but I think I'm beginning to understand you. Now will you send me back with a message for Arthur?"

"Oh yes, with a dozen, if you like! Tell him, from me, on no account to—" again she broke off. "I'm confident there's the cuckoo again! It's quite too ridiculous!"

"On no account to start on this miserable expedition—it sets off on the twentieth of next month," said the eager mother.

"On no account to attempt to enter Parliament, or the Albert Hall orchestra; perhaps he might pass muster at the 'Saturday Pop——' Oh, there's a Camberwell Beauty, I declare! I wonder if I can catch it," and off she started in pursuit of the brilliant butterfly, leaving her companion to get over her chagrin as best she might.

When she came back presently a little out of breath, Mrs. Glynde, with a very grave face, was retracing her steps in the direction of the park gates.

"I see it is useless for me to stay any longer," she said; "will you like to keep these verses of Arthur's?—I don't suppose he will ever send you any more."

"Ah, yes, I may as well keep them. Tell him if I don't see him again I will write, 'In memoriam of A. G.' across the top of the page; but——"

"Juliet, I shall take no messages to my poor boy that will drive him to despair. If you have anything to say that will give him hope I'll carry that."

"You wouldn't let me finish what I was going to say—I declare there is that lovely butterfly again!"

And once more she would have started in pursuit if Mrs. Glynde had not absolutely taken both of her hands in hers and kept her rooted to the spot.

"I insist on knowing what you were going to say," she exclaimed. "I will not stand here to be tortured as you torture Arthur."

"Dear me," said Juliet, in mild astonishment; "first you won't let me speak, and then you hold both my hands, and 'insist' on my saying what I was going to say when you prevented me."

"You said if you didn't see him again you would write 'In memoriam of A. G.' across the top of his verses; but——" said

Mrs. Glynde, anxious to bring her back to the point.

"But it will give me very great pleasure if he'll come and see me here on the twenty-first of next month. That was all I had to say when you interrupted me."

"All!" cried the delighted Mrs. Glynde. "It is quite enough! I understand! Good-bye to the expedition that starts on the twentieth, if you want to see him on the twenty-first."

She tip-toed, and insisted on kissing Juliet on both cheeks—an embrace which Juliet received very coolly. Then she quickened her footsteps. "I must get back as soon as possible," she said, "I told the MacNamaras I wouldn't keep their carriage for more than an hour, and I've kept it for nearly three."

It was easy to see that her haste to get back was stimulated by her fear lest the wayward girl might, in another minute, so qualify her message as to render it not worth delivering.

In order the more effectually to prevent such a catastrophe, she hastily turned the talk on other topics—a recent wedding, the newest mode in hair-dressing, the latest piece of gossip that had reached her ears.

"The way people talk is beyond everything—no one is let alone in these days," she said; "do you know, Juliet, actually last night when I was dining at the Adeanes, I was asked—you'll scarcely believe it—if there was any truth in the report that Ida and her husband had quarrelled on their way to the station, and that Captain Culvers had gone off to Paris alone, and that Ida had returned home, and was staying with you at Dering?"

She said this with her eyes fixed on Juliet's face.

And if she had spoken out all the truth, she would have said not only that she had been asked the question at her dinner-party of the previous night, but that her own maid that very morning, as she had assisted in her toilet, had told her of Captain Culvers's sudden return to Glynde Lodge without his bride, and of Lady Culvers's strange story to account for the fact.

Juliet's calm, pale face gave no sign.

"It's perfectly true, every word of it," she answered, coolly; "Ida is at the present moment at the Hall—in a padded room on the top storey, contrived expressly for our family lunatics of a previous generation. And Sefton has been sent to prison for marrying

her, whence in due course he'll emerge like a butterfly from a chrysalis, shake his beautiful wings, and float straight away to heaven. Good-bye, Mrs. Glynde, give my love to Lily MacNamara. Tell her next time she wears that apple-green dress of hers not to put so much Condy's fluid to her hair. The contrast of tints is quite too appalling!"

CHAPTER X.

THE next day was to bring news of a startling kind to the Hall. Juliet was spending a lazy morning feeding the water-fowl on the lake, and making believe to read "Red Cotton Nightcap Country," when a message was brought to her that Lord Culvers wished to see her in his study at once. She went back to find her father waiting at the hall-door for her with an open letter in his hand, and a look on his face which said "something to tell" plainly as words could.

"News of Ida's brooch," he said, so soon as her feet were inside the door. Then he led the way into his study, spread the letter before her, and bade her read it.

It came under cover from Messrs. Hunt and Locke, of Chancery Lane. The writer was an English priest—Baldwin by name—who officiated at the church of the Carmelite Friars, in the Rue Bellarmine, Paris. He stated that on the previous Sunday at the midday celebration of mass a diamond brooch, answering in all respects to the one described in the advertisement in the daily papers, had been dropped into the offertory bag. By whom—whether by a penitent as an offering, or by a thief in order to escape detection—he could not say. The church was crowded at the time, and the brother who had collected the alms had not noticed anything unusual in the manner of giving in any part of the church.

The writer concluded by giving his address in the Rue Bellarmine, and stating that the brooch was in his possession awaiting identification from its owner.

Juliet's face grew as white as her father's as she read the letter.

"Oh, father, what does it mean—what can it mean?" she cried, in a quaking voice, as she read the last word. "Ida has not dropped that brooch into the bag, why should she?"

Her thoughts flew to the worst.

"Can something terrible have happened to her, and some thief have— Oh, no,

no, it cannot be!" And then she broke down utterly, and sank into a chair, covering her face with her hands.

Lord Culvers, though scarcely less agitated, did his best to calm her.

"Now, now, Juliet," he said, tremulously, "if you give way like this you'll unnerve me and make me unfit for what I've got to do."

Neither of his daughters were of the weeping, hysteric order; tears with them, after childish days were past, were of rare occurrence; when they did break down it meant something more than a headache or an attack of nerves, and carried weight accordingly.

For one thing, her outburst of grief entirely dispelled from his mind any lingering suspicion that she was in some way cognizant of her sister's movements.

Juliet calmed herself with difficulty.

"What have you done? What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Well, my dear, you see I must start for Paris at once, in order to identify the brooch. I've already ordered the carriage, and if I catch the next train from here I shall save the night boat, and——"

"It may not be Ida's brooch after all," interrupted Juliet, eagerly.

"Exactly, my dear," said Lord Culvers, almost cheerfully, and glad to have a chance of putting a bright face on matters. "Before we allow ourselves to imagine that the worst—the very worst has happened, we must make sure that the brooch is Ida's. I've telegraphed to Sefton, and——"

"Oh, why not have telegraphed to Olive? he has a thousand times more energy!" again interrupted the girl, feeling instinctively that the one man was as a rock and the other but as a reed to depend upon.

"Now, now, my dear," answered her father, deprecatingly, "Ida's husband is the right person to act as my coadjutor in this matter. But will you come with me?—that is, if you can get ready in five minutes—I shall be glad to have you."

Juliet thought for a moment.

"No," she answered, slowly, "I must stay here for the present. I may have to follow you, I cannot tell."

"Well, well," answered Lord Culvers, a little puzzled, "it doesn't matter much. I take it no one can identify this brooch but me; there's a flaw in one of the emeralds in the spray that will enable me to swear to it, and——"

"But, father," interrupted Juliet, "you won't try to hush the matter up any longer, will you? You must—you will apply to the police now. We must move heaven and earth to end this suspense."

"Yes, yes, of course; that is, provided the brooch is really Ida's," he answered, clinging desperately to the last shred of hope that there might yet be a possibility of avoiding the publicity which calling in the assistance of the police would involve. "You see," he added, reprovingly, "you are taking the worst possible view of things. Ida here'sf may be in Paris—Heaven only knows where she is—and may have read the advertisement for her brooch; and, fearing lest it may draw attention to herself, may have——"

"What!" interrupted Juliet, "you think Ida capable of giving away mother's brooch in that fashion!"

"My dear," said Lord Culvers, with a sigh, "Heaven only knows what you are both capable of. I could never find where to draw the line."

And then the carriage was announced, and Juliet, all nervous terror for fear her father should miss his train, and so lose the night steamer, did her best to control her agitation, and to expedite his departure.

Lord Culvers had a characteristic farewell speech to make to his wife and daughter as they stood saying their good-byes to him under the porch. It was:

"You two won't quarrel more than you can help while I'm away, now will you?"

Lady Culvers's reply was characteristic also. It was:

"Dear love, if Juliet is ever so trying, I shall put up with it all for your sake."

And Juliet's reply was also characteristic:

"Quarrel with Peggy—at such a time!" she exclaimed. "I should as soon think of quarrelling with the flies on the ceiling!"

So soon as her father was out of sight, without even calling her stepmother into council, she despatched a telegram to Olive, telling him of the finding of the brooch, and asking him to meet her father in Paris on the following day. She felt quite equal to doing this on her own responsibility. It was all very well for her father to preach deference to the proprieties of life, and select Sefton as a suitable coadjutor; she felt that the proprieties of life had already had too much deference

paid to them, and that it was time now to make all considerations bend to their one pressing necessity of ending a terrible suspense.

After she had despatched her telegram, she went wandering out into the garden, and thence into the park beyond; her mind capable of holding one thought, and one thought only: "Ida, Ida, where is she!"

At every turn of her footsteps a shadowy Ida seemed to meet and confront her. There, a cool patch of green in the afternoon sun, lay the tennis-court where she and Ida had had such glorious combats, and where, if she closed her eyes for a minute, she could see her in her white tennis-dress, tossing, in semi-contemptuous fashion, her ball of bank-notes to the willing recipient. There, on the margin of the lake, which glistened like silver between the shifting boughs of the intervening trees, stood the drooping willow that had been their "wishing willow" from the days of short frocks and strapped shoes upwards. There, too, in an out-of-the-way corner of the garden, lay the little flower-beds they had delighted to call their own in their days of mischief and mud-pies, and which the gardener had carefully "set to rights" every evening, and their tricky fingers had as carefully "set to wrongs" the next morning. Why, the very birds as they piped and twittered in and out among the shrubberies seemed to sound Ida's name in her ears as they recalled the long, happy, lazy mornings they two had spent under the shadow of the big flowering rhododendrons, embroidery in hand, listening to the sweet, wild notes.

"Oh, it is too much, too much!" exclaimed the girl, covering her ears with her hands as if to shut out a chorus of voices that cried aloud to her. "All that is past and gone for ever. Ida, Ida, where is she now?"

She went hurriedly back to the house and straight to her own room, where she shut herself in with her pen and ink.

The sun went down, the dinner-bell clanged through the house, the moon rose high above the oaks and elms in the park, but still Juliet sat writing there, slowly, carefully, painfully, as if each word she wrote held a life's sentence in it.

And if one had looked over her shoulder he would have seen that her letter was addressed to Olive, and that from its first to its last line it was about Ida, and Ida only.

CHAPTER XI.

OLIVE did not need to wait for Juliet's reply to his letter in order to obtain Captain Culvers's address. On the day of his arrival in Paris there was delivered to him a letter from his father, which made him feel that he had done well to break his journey there.

"Since I said good-bye to you last week," Mr. Redway wrote, "a strange circumstance has occurred. A lawyer—Phillips by name—with whom I have been casually brought into contact, told me, in the course of conversation, of a curious letter that he said he had received from a member of a family in which he knew that I and my son were interested.

"This letter, which he subsequently showed me, was dated from 15, Rue Vervien, Paris, and was signed Sefton Culvers. In roundabout fashion the writer asked for advice for a friend, who he said wished to borrow a few thousand pounds on a clause in his wife's marriage settlement, which provided that, if she died childless, her whole fortune—over one hundred thousand pounds—would revert to him. There were no children, Captain Culvers went on to say, nor any likelihood of any, as the husband and wife had quarrelled and separated, and he had now every reason to suppose that reconciliation between them would be impossible.

"Captain Culvers further stated that his friend's need for money was immediate and pressing. He was willing to pay a high percentage for even a small loan so long as it could be had at once, and without the trouble of legal formalities that might necessitate negotiation or correspondence with his wife's family.

"Now it doesn't require a wiseacre to come to the conclusion that the friend, for whom Captain Culvers made these enquiries, was the best of all his friends—himself; and that the letter would never have been addressed to Phillips if Culvers had known that I was likely to have dealings with him.

"But the most important part of the whole letter, to my way of thinking, is the phrase, 'the husband and wife have quarrelled, separated, and there is now every reason to suppose that reconciliation between them would be impossible.'

"Of course, the most charitable supposition would be that Captain Culvers made use of these expressions wholly and solely

for the purpose of facilitating and expediting the loan of which he is so much in need, that there may not be a grain of truth in them, and that he may be as much in the dark as to his wife's movements as we are.

"On the other hand, there is the possibility that in speaking thus, he was speaking of matters within his knowledge. Juliet has, you say, spoken of serious quarrels that took place during the engagement. Some such a quarrel may have occurred on the day before the wedding—which, to save an open scandal, was allowed to go on—it may even have been continued during the drive from the house to the graveyard, and Captain Culvers may thus have been in some sort prepared for his wife's disappearance. Subsequently she may have written to him, and his words, 'there is now every reason to suppose that reconciliation between them would be impossible,' may point to the fact that he will not consent to certain conditions his wife wishes to impose upon him, or that she refuses consent to terms proposed by her husband.

"I confess that from the first my suspicions have pointed in this direction rather than towards Juliet, who I think has been somewhat unjustly suspected on the matter. If you remember, she hinted to you that it would be as well to keep an eye on Captain Culvers, who probably knew more than any one imagined of her sister's movements. His letter to Phillips, to my way of thinking, gives colour to the idea, and allows us to conjecture that, negotiations with his wife having come to nothing, he has tried to raise money on her property without her knowledge. If I were in Lord Culvers's place I would let every other theory go and concentrate attention in this quarter. It would not in the least surprise me to learn that Ida, as well as her husband, is in Paris. My own belief is that she is safe and well wherever she may be, and is only deterred from communicating with her own people by the fear that they may compel her to make terms with her husband, and to live with him as his wife."

To this letter was added a postscript, which ran thus:

"By the way, I am told, on good authority, that the house where Captain Culvers has taken up his abode—No. 15, Rue Vervien—does not bear a very good reputation. It is kept by a Russian—Ivanoff by name—and is the resort of

all sorts of shady people, British and foreign—gamblers, sporting and betting-men, in fact of adventurers of every class."

Before Clive had time to shape his thoughts to a clear judgement on this letter, Juliet's telegram, despatched immediately after Lord Culvers's departure, was brought to him, and then, hey presto! the father's letter was read upside down, and a clear judgement on that or any other matter for the time became an impossibility to him.

Juliet's telegram ran briefly thus:

"The brooch has been found in Paris. Father crosses to-night. Pray meet him at the station to-morrow morning."

The news, coming on the heels of his father's letter, for the moment startled and bewildered him. The telegram, read side by side with Mr. Redway's conjectures, called forth speculations as to probabilities as wild as they were vague.

The finding of the brooch in Paris no doubt confirmed Mr. Redway's surmise that Ida had been in Paris, and in communication with her husband; but to Clive's way of thinking did not give the slightest support to his conjecture that, "wherever she might be she was safe and well." On the contrary, to his mind it seemed to point to a directly opposite conclusion, that is to say, if the brooch had been found, as he surmised, in a stranger's hands.

And his brain, once set going in this direction and stimulated by his hatred of his successful rival, soon refused to be trammelled by the probable, but ran riot among the wildest possibilities.

His father had stated the case far too leniently for such a scoundrel as Culvers, who, no doubt, throughout had been acting on a settled plan. Ida's fortune—over one hundred thousand pounds—had from the very first been always before this man's mind, and he had set his wits to work to get it entirely into his own hands. He was beset by creditors. He knew that a girl of Ida's high spirit could never, under any circumstances, be likely to enact the part of a patient Griselda and hand her property unreservedly to his keeping, and so he had done his best to render the clause in her marriage settlement, which provided that, if she died childless, her fortune should pass to him, "un fait accompli." Ida had most likely been inveigled from her mother's grave into some place where she would be surrounded by

Captain Culvers's creatures. The letter to her father had without doubt been written under compulsion, in order to throw her friends off the scent, and she had been kept to all intents and purposes a prisoner until means had been found to end her life without detection to the criminals. There were plenty of people who could be found to do such things, and plenty of places where they could be done both in London and Paris. Why, No. 15, Rue Vervien, might even have been selected for the purpose.

Of course, at present he knew nothing as to the where and how the diamond brooch had been found; but he had not the slightest doubt that when fuller information came to him it would confirm his terrible suspicions. Great heavens! And they had been all sitting still with folded hands while such a piece of iniquity was being perpetrated!

And when Clive had got so far in his thinking, his brain seemed to reel, and he felt as if all power of reasoning had left him.

Inaction seemed impossible. An hour of black temptation came to him.

The wild beast instinct to tear, to kill the thing he hated, grew strong in him. Now why should he not that very minute take a pistol in his hand, go straight to 15, Rue Vervien, and put a bullet through the brain of the man who, according to all acknowledged principles of right and wrong, was fit for the hangman's hands?

His mood of fury did not soon spend itself. While it lasted, his revenge, or, as he phrased it, "the act of retributive justice," seemed to him sweeter than anything else life could offer him; sweeter far than would be the discovery of Ida and her possible reconciliation to her husband.

If only the bitter suspense could be ended, and he could know that she was peacefully laid to rest in her grave, he felt that he could kneel down and thank Heaven for her deliverance from the keeping of such a man as Captain Culvers—a gamester, an unprincipled rōu, no doubt; a man, in fact, who had naught to recommend him but a handsome face and certain showy personal accomplishments.

Side by side with this image of Captain Culvers came a vision of Ida; not the marble-faced, self-repressed bride of three weeks back, but a girl who had quick blood coursing in her veins; eyes that lighted up with every passing thought; lips that knew how to speak those thoughts in a voice that vibrated to every changeful

mood. Out of the shadowy past stepped this Ida, in the white fluttering robes in which he had first seen her at the country house of a friend. How well he remembered the day! It seemed but yesterday, although nearly a year had since slipped away. It was the close of a hot August day, the golden glamour of a setting sun was falling on greensward and terrace, a thousand birds were carolling their hymns to the dying day. A tall queenly figure, she had stood before him, with eyes looking straight into his own, lips parted and half-smiling, and pure pale brow that seemed to demand a crown of lilies as its right.

The wave of memory quenched the fury of his thoughts. Sefton Culvers even was forgotten in the bitter recollection of a cup of happiness held close to his lips and then for ever denied to them.

He bowed his head upon his hands; hot, passionate tears forced themselves from his eyes.

"Oh, my darling, my darling!" he cried, brokenly, "why did I let you go? Why, why did I suffer myself to be fooled out of my happiness?"

And hand-in-hand with the bitter recollection of the easy manner in which he had allowed himself to be blinded to the real state of Ida's feelings towards him, came the thought that perhaps, after all, the bullet intended for Captain Culvers's brain might more fitly find its home in his own.

CHAPTER XII.

IN his softer mood the voices of common sense and reason made themselves heard once more, counselling a suspension of judgement as well as of action, until the morrow put him in possession of the news that Lord Culvers would bring.

The circumstances under which the brooch had been found might possibly have thrown a fresh light on the whole affair, might have already swept away Lord Culvers's wish to hush the matter up, and it might be that even now the whole machinery of French and English police had been set to work to trace the missing girl.

The hours that must intervene before his conjectures could have yea or nay given to them, stretched before him like so many months. It was all very well for common sense and reason to say, "Do nothing till you know what turn affairs

are taking." Inclination whispered, "There can be no harm in your taking a survey of No. 15, Rue Vervien, from the outside, and if by any chance you and Captain Culvers should meet face to face, and you—well, should have something to say to him, no great damage could possibly be done."

So he took his hat, and, after despatching a telegram to Juliet, saying that without fail he would meet Lord Culvers on his arrival the next day, he turned his steps in the direction of the Rue Vervien.

It was nearly six o'clock in the evening, and the Boulevards were beginning to look somewhat deserted, cafés and restaurants to be somewhat thronged.

He had to ask his way once or twice, for he was not sure in which direction lay the Rue Vervien. He was directed down the Avenue de l'Opéra, and thence into a narrow street lined on either side with cafés and restaurants. Off this street at right angles led the Rue Vervien, a quiet, old-fashioned thoroughfare, with tall but irregularly-built houses, that were evidently occupied by tenants of various degrees of social rank.

There was not much traffic here, the street was a by-way, and seemed to lead nowhere. Two girls in muslin caps were carrying between them a basket of well-starched linen; a nursemaid and some much be-frilled children went sauntering past. Two men were coming up the street at a somewhat rapid pace, and were talking loudly and excitedly as they came along.

It did not need a second glance at these men to discover their nationality; the cut of their clothes, the very tie of their cravat, proclaimed them Englishmen—Englishmen, too, of a type to be found mostly on the race-course and in the betting-ring, and best described by that untranslatable word, "horsey."

As they passed Clive he distinctly heard Captain Culvers's name mentioned. Upon which one of them exclaimed:

"It's the two B's—baccarat and brandy—that'll do for him. I doubt if he'll be fit for play to-night."

And then their voices passed out of ear-shot.

The remark did not strike pleasant key-notes of thought. They had most likely just come away from an interview with Captain Culvers, and no doubt had spoken with the veracity of eye-witnesses. Clive

scowled at the row of tall houses now beginning to throw long shadows across the street. Now which was No. 15!

Here his attention was arrested by a little Italian organ-boy, who, with a monkey mounted on his shoulder, was grinding out some doleful melody in front of one of the larger and more pretentious houses.

With the recollection of the little messenger of whom he had gone in pursuit still in his mind, he said to himself:

"It will be strange if that boy is playing in front of No. 15."

He went on a few paces and surveyed the house before which the boy stood. It was tall and narrow, with iron balconies, and windows filled in with fluted wooden blinds, much yellowed with sun and dirt.

And over its green-painted door, in brass figures, stood its number—15.

It might be nothing more than a strange coincidence, or it might be one of those "momentous trifles" which, in the annals of crime, have times without number led to the detection and punishment of criminals.

With his thoughts in their present condition, the latter supposition seemed the more probable.

He steadily scrutinised the boy's features, so as to have them by heart in case of future need.

The child was of the usual type that one associates with a monkey and an organ—large-eyed and olive-skinned, with full, pouting lips and straight black hair.

He touched his slouching felt hat, and droned away more vigorously than ever when he saw that he had attracted the gentleman's attention.

The well-trained monkey pulled off his little tasseled cap and presented it. Clive dropped a coin into it, and, accosting the lad, asked him in the best Italian he could command how long he had been in Paris, and if he had ever been in England.

The boy's reply was voluble enough, but was given in a patois whose only word intelligible to Clive was "Signor."

So Clive tried him with the same questions in French, only, however, with a similar result. Then an idea struck him, and taking a half-sovereign out of his purse, he held it up to the boy and beckoned to him to follow him.

The child, with something of wonder showing in his big black eyes, followed him out of the quiet thoroughfare into the

street of many restaurants. Among these Clive selected one that had an Italian name over its doorway, and where the faces of the waiters, as they bustled in and out among their marble tables, proclaimed their nationality.

He called a waiter, and desired him to bring to the boy whatever he chose to have in the way of refreshments.

Then while the little fellow, with evident enjoyment, disposed of a plate of macaroni and cheese, he desired the man to question him, find out his province, and whether he had recently come from England.

The waiter did his best as interpreter, but said that the child's patois was all but unintelligible to him, it being one of the mountain dialects of Calabria or the Abruzzi, while he himself was a Milanese. He could, however, just make out enough to know that the boy denied ever having been in England, and stated that this was his first visit to Paris.

A question as to where the child lodged in the big city elicited the answer that might have been expected: He had no settled place of abode, even at night; a cellar, an arch, or the porch of a church, was all that he asked for by way of shelter.

With so much of information Clive had to be content.

"After all," he said to himself, "it most probably was nothing more than a coincidence that an Italian organ-boy should bring Ida's note, and an Italian organ-boy be found playing outside the house where Captain Culvers lodged—a coincidence so trivial that no one but himself would have dreamed of laying stress upon it."

Nevertheless, as a matter of precaution, in case it might be of importance to keep the boy in view, he desired the waiter to give him the change from the half-sovereign, and to make him understand that if he came to the restaurant at the same hour the next day there would be another supper for him.

The child, with a profusion of bows and smiles, shouldered his organ and monkey once more and departed, this time turning his steps in an opposite direction to the Rue Vervien.

Clive watched the little fellow out of sight, doubtful still as to whether he had let slip an opportunity, or had magnified a "trifle light as air" into a matter of moment.

CHAPTER XIII.

"YES, yes, my boy, I'm quite well. Don't trouble about me," said Lord Culvers, as he shook hands with Clive. "I'm a trifle worried, that's all, and a little tired. Juliet sent you to meet me! Ah! very thoughtful of her, I'm sure— But—but where is Sefton? Have you seen anything of him?"

They were standing within the station, just outside the barrier, through which a motley crowd of passengers of many nationalities was passing.

"I have not seen Captain Culvers, and know nothing of his movements," answered Clive, curtly. "I have a carriage waiting for you; where will you like to drive? I suppose your man will look after your baggage!"

"Ah yes, he'll look after my portmanteau, and send it on to your hotel. But—but where can Sefton be? He must have had my telegram. He must be ill, surely."

"That's very likely," said Clive, coldly, and thinking of the two B's.

"Then I think I'll drive first to the Rue Vervien and look him up. Poor fellow, he may be frantic to learn the news I have to tell him." Then he paused, with his foot on the step of the voiture, looking dubiously at Clive. "I—I—don't think it will be necessary for you to go with me, Clive— Don't mistake, I'm only too glad of your company at such a time; but—but you know you two don't quite hit it off together."

Clive could have laughed at any other time at the old gentleman's nervous anxiety to keep him and Sefton apart. But the present was no time for smiling, even, so he answered, gloomily:

"I'll walk up and down the street, or wait for you anywhere you like, while you call on Captain Culvers. But if you don't mind, we'll drive together to his house. There's a great deal I want to know that you can tell me."

So it was on their way to the Rue Vervien that Clive had the letter of the English priest read to him, with its story of the strange finding of Ida's brooch.

Read one way, it seemed to confirm Mr. Redway's supposition that Ida was in Paris at the present moment. Looked at in another light, it seemed to give a basis to their gloomiest fears.

"I suppose," Clive said, savagely, "you feel bound to look up Culvers, otherwise

I should say don't lose a minute in going to the house of this priest, see the brooch, and drive straight away to the Palais de Justice."

"Ah yes, my boy, I feel bound, as you say, to look up Sefton. You're very good to—give me the pleasure of your company. But Sefton, as you know, is the right person to act with me in this matter. And—and if you get tired of waiting, and go back to your hotel, I—I shan't feel affronted."

Olive bit his lip to keep back an angry word. Lord Culvers had as good as dismissed him; he paused, even, on the doorstep of No. 15, as if expecting him to shake hands, and say that, as he was no longer of any use, he'd go back at once. But Olive did not choose to be dismissed. Instinctively he felt that they might be on the very verge of a crisis, that a single false step might ruin all, and that Lord Culvers, advised only by his nephew, might very easily take that false step.

So at the risk of being thought *de trop*, and of having to hear Sefton use that odious expression, "my wife," again and again in his most offensively possessive tone, he told Lord Culvers that he would wait for him as long as he pleased, but at the same time he thought that three minutes was enough and to spare for Captain Culvers to get his hat and walk down the stairs into the street; nothing more than that was required of him.

It was, however, more than three minutes—nearer a quarter of an hour—before Lord Culvers came out of the house and re-entered the carriage. And when he did so it was unaccompanied by Sefton.

"I can't make it out—I'm bewildered utterly," he said, when he had directed the coachman to drive to the Rue Bellarmine. "Sefton has behaved in the most extraordinary manner, refused point-blank to go with me to identify Ida's brooch; that is, if I adhere to my resolve of driving to the Prefect of Police afterwards. He said the most outrageous things to me; claimed the brooch as his property; said that he would have no confounded fuss made over his wife's diamonds."

Olive's remark on this was a short, sharp expression which, if Sefton had heard, he might have felt disposed to resent.

Lord Culvers's face grew more and more distressed as he went on with his story.

"It's mystery upon mystery. I can't think that Sefton altogether knew what

he was saying; his face was flushed, his manner very excited. When I went in he had a newspaper in his hand, and he drew my attention to an advertisement which he said had appeared in several English and French journals, and asked me if I had had anything to do with its insertion. He'd teach people to meddle with his private affairs, he added. Such an extraordinary advertisement it was, 'Sub signo et sub rosa,' nothing more. My head is going round, Olive. Can you see a meaning in all this? I don't like to say it, but the impression left on my mind is that Sefton had had a little more wine than was good for him, and did not quite know what he was saying."

Then they had pulled up at the priest's house in the Rue Bellarmine, and the task of identifying the brooch for the moment drove Sefton and his extraordinary conduct from their thoughts.

Father Baldwin did not keep them waiting. He entered the room brooch in hand.

"This is the exact condition in which it was when taken from the offertory bag," he said as he handed it to Lord Culvers.

Lord Culvers took out his eye-glass and closely examined it. Then he started and turned a shade paler.

"Ida's brooch, not a doubt. There is the emerald with the flaw in it; but it was not in this condition when she wore it last," he said, as he passed it to Olive for inspection.

Olive saw at a glance that the brooch had been tampered with. The ruby eyes of the bird had disappeared; from its body here and there diamonds had been abstracted—abstracted, too, with a rough hand, and some, no doubt, rough-and-ready tool—assuredly not with the hand and the tool of a skilled jeweller. Also, sundry of the emeralds in the spray which the bird held in its beak, were missing, and the pin of the brooch was broken.

Questions addressed to the priest elicited no further information than that he had already given in his letter. He, however, strongly advised that the Commissaire of Police should at once be consulted on the matter.

There seemed to be no other course open to them now. So Lord Culvers, after writing his cheque for the promised reward and desiring Father Baldwin to pay it to the credit of any charity he pleased, ordered the voiturier to drive at once to the Palais de Justice.

CHAPTER XIV.

WEARIED and dispirited, Lord Culvers leaned his head upon his hand.

"It's altogether too much, Clive," he said. "I'm not a young man. I feel all to pieces. Life is a little too hard for me just now."

They had returned from their interview with the Prefect of Police, and now sat in Clive's sitting-room at his hotel, trying to "face the worst and act for the best."

That interview had been a long and painful one, and the two men had come away from it fully convinced that they had acted the part of imbeciles in allowing a fortnight of precious time to slip away without making an effort to track the missing girl.

As a matter of course, in order to give full emphasis to the mystery of the recovered brooch, it had been necessary to relate to the Prefect the story of Ida's marriage and subsequent disappearance; also, the full history of her engagement, together with the footing on which she had appeared to stand towards Captain Culvers, as stated by Juliet.

An interpreter, fortunately, had not been required, for although the Prefect had preferred to speak in his own tongue, he had a perfect knowledge of colloquial English.

Lord Culvers's narrative, in all its minute detail, had been taken down in writing by an official, who, as a matter of course, was present.

On the disappearance of the young lady the Prefect had declined to express an opinion, stating that he could not possibly form one until he had given most careful thought to the case in all its bearings.

He had, however, said that in so serious a matter they could not afford to neglect any detail, however slight, and, therefore, he proposed at once instituting a search for the little organ-boy, of whom mention had been made. He had also proposed sending one of his officers to wait at the Italian restaurant that evening, in the hope that the promise of a supper would be inducement enough to take the little fellow there.

Here Clive had supplied a full and minute description of the boy.

Then they had come to the finding of the brooch in the offertory bag, and the damaged piece of jewellery was handed to the Prefect for his inspection.

Upon this, his questions had set in

one direction and centered entirely upon Sefton Culvers, his past and his present career.

Lord Culvers, a little astonished, had done his best to answer these questions.

Of his nephew's career during the past six or seven years he could give but little information. Captain Culvers had had a good deal of foreign service, had returned home with his health impaired about eighteen months back, and had thought it best to send in his papers to the Horse Guards. This was about the sum total of all Lord Culvers had to tell.

The Prefect had laid stress upon Captain Culvers's resignation of his commission, and had asked if no other reason than enfeebled health could be assigned for it.

Lord Culvers had replied that if any other reason existed he did not know of it. He had surmised, and knew now for certain, that his nephew was heavily in debt; but, so far as he was aware, there had never been a whisper against his private character.

Then had succeeded a number of questions as to Captain Culvers's doings in Paris at the present moment, and the attitude he had assumed since the disappearance of his wife. Upon this there had followed the description of Sefton's present surroundings and most likely associates, together with the account of Lord Culvers's interview with him that morning, the young man's extraordinary manner, the excitement he had shown over a chance advertisement, and, finally, his peremptory wish that the attention of the police should not be drawn to the recovery of the brooch.

Here the Prefect had asked for and had taken down in writing the advertisement referred to.

Then Clive had leaned forward and had asked one or two eager questions. Did the damaged condition of the brooch of necessity point to robbery, and its broken pin to violence? Was it presumable that such robbery and violence had taken place in Paris?

The Prefect had answered in cautious fashion, that, although in so serious a matter they could not afford to disregard any circumstance, however slight, they must yet be on their guard to prevent the main facts of the case from becoming entangled with side issues, which should be classified and treated as things apart. To his way of thinking, the disappearance of the lady was one thing, the finding of

the brooch another. 'He was not prepared to say that Captain Culvers's wife had not fallen into bad hands, and been—well—robbed, if nothing worse, and that such robbery with violence had not taken place in Paris. All he said was, that neither the condition of the brooch nor its recovery in Paris went to prove the one thing or the other. If that brooch had been in the possession of professional thieves, they would have known perfectly well how to dispose of every one of the stones, which would have been removed with the finest of jeweller's tools, and the skeleton of the brooch would have been then dropped into a smelting-pot, not into an offertory bag. Here, however, was a brooch that had been tampered with by an amateur, who had evidently, before he was half-way through his task, become scared, and had got rid of it in the readiest way that offered. The broken pin to his mind did not of necessity point to a struggle or violence of any sort; it quite as much pointed to an accident. A broken brooch-pin and a lost brooch were matters of everyday occurrence.

In conclusion, the Prefect had asked for permission to put himself at once in communication with the English police, in order that the highest professional skill in both countries might be brought to bear on the affair, which, to his way of thinking, was beginning to assume a most serious aspect.

It was no wonder that Lord Culvers and Clive should have come away from such an interview with their hopes at their lowest, their fears at their highest; nor that the former should lean his head upon his hand declaring that life was a little too much for him just then, and that Clive should have never a word to say by way of comfort.

But if there were little to say by way of consolation, there was plenty to discuss in the arrangements of the details of the course of action which the Prefect had recommended for their adoption.

With these details Clive strove to arouse Lord Culvers from his lethargy and depression, wishing heartily, however, meanwhile, that a younger and more energetic coadjutor could have been assigned to him.

"It will be best," he said, "for you to return to England—to London, of course; while I will remain in Paris. There should be some one in either place who can give authority or bear responsibility at a moment's notice."

Lord Culvers gave a heavy sigh.

"That should be Sefton's duty; he ought to be in the front now, doing his part and helping us to do ours," he said, querulously.

Clive could hardly trust his tongue to speak Sefton's name.

"That man must simply be ignored; he drops out of the affair. We can do without him," he said, curtly.

"Supposing," said Lord Culvers presently, with a little attempt at a smile, "that Ida should write in a day or two, and tell us where she is staying, we shall all feel such fools for the fuss we have made."

"I wish to Heaven we could be made to feel fools in that fashion," answered Clive, vehemently, and trying his hardest to repress the feeling of irritation that was beginning to grow up in his mind against the man who could entertain such a thought at such a time.

Yet it must be confessed that Fate was dealing a little harshly with Lord Culvers at the moment.

Fancy setting an egg on end, and bidding it run about and crow like a chicken. When the poor egg rolled over and fell helplessly to the ground, one would feel bound to admit that a little too much had been required of it.

All Lord Culvers had ever asked of Providence was a quiet life in which to enjoy the good things bestowed upon him. And a quiet life was just the one thing that Providence persisted in denying to him.

But, whether able to comply with them or not, demands upon Lord Culvers's energies were from this point to follow thick and fast.

He did his best to acquiesce heartily in Clive's practical suggestions, and expressed his willingness to return to England on the following day. To return sooner he feared would be an impossibility; he felt that a night's rest on a feather-bed before undertaking a second journey was an absolute necessity to him.

Then, with another feeble little attempt at a smile, he wondered if a outlet and a glass of claret would put a little strength into him.

Clive, with a twinge of remorse, recollecting that the old gentleman had had nothing in the way of food since his arrival in the morning, at once ordered the much-needed refreshment.

He himself, however, at the moment,

felt eating to be an impossibility. The heat was intense; a thunder-storm seemed threatening; he felt stifled within four walls. There was yet an hour to be got through before he kept his appointment at the Italian café with the little organ-boy. He thought he would take a turn in the Champs Elysées and see if the fresh air would clear his brain and put some fresh ideas into it.

Ideas, however, are among the many things for which the demand does not create the supply. Olive wandered along the sultry, dusty road in the direction of the Bois de Boulogne, his brain meantime, instead of grinding out fresh ideas, working incessantly at the old treadmill of anxieties, perplexities, and distresses which for him from the very first had gathered round Ida's disappearance.

Half-past five sounded from a clock-tower, and he turned his steps towards the street of many restaurants, hoping to find his little black-eyed friend awaiting him there.

He found the usual number of people assembled in the café round the marble tables, eating their ices or drinking their chocolate; but never a sign of the little organ-grinder.

He questioned the waiter who had attended to him on the previous day as to whether he had seen anything of the child, and received a negative in reply.

Then he was himself addressed by a thin, wiry little man, whom he had noted as he had entered the café, seated in a corner, to all appearance absorbed in the perusal of his "Figaro."

Olive guessed in a moment that this individual was the detective whom the Prefect of Police had promised should be in attendance at the café.

They had a little talk together.

The detective expressed his conviction that they were both on a lost errand. He was convinced that the boy would not make his appearance; although when pressed by Olive to do so, he declined to give the reasons for his conviction. He stated further that his orders were to remain in or outside the place until it closed at midnight. There was therefore no necessity for "M'sieu" to remain unless he felt so disposed.

Olive, however, did feel so disposed, and he lingered about the restaurant until daylight waned and gas-lamps were lighted.

Then he thought it best to return to his

hotel, in case the evening mail might have brought news of any kind, or information that called for immediate action.

On the steps of his hotel he was met by a chance acquaintance, who detained him a few minutes in conversation. This chance acquaintance was a member of the Alpine Club, en route for the Swiss mountains, and was eager for detail to Olive a new line of road that he had mapped out for himself. Olive had but a scanty attention to give him, and shook him off as soon as possible. During the few minutes that they stood talking together, Olive had his attention arrested by a sister of the Salvation Army, who came out of the hotel and passed down the steps close to his elbow.

He caught a glimpse of her face under its black poke-bonnet as she went by. She was a woman of about twenty-five years of age, English not a doubt, with a pale, careworn face, that was nevertheless rendered attractive by its remarkable sweetness of expression.

He gave a passing wonder to the thought what could have brought her, without her colleagues, into so uncongenial a neighbourhood, and then went on to the room where he had left Lord Culvers.

He found it in utter darkness, save for a single candle which burned upon a side-table that they had given up to their writing materials, and a patch of gas-light, which an outside lamp made upon the wall.

It seemed strange. The unlighted lamps could be easily accounted for by the fact that Lord Culvers, fast asleep, reclined in a comfortable easy-chair, with his feet resting on another chair.

But the one candle on the writing-table! It seemed to suggest that some one had entered while Lord Culvers had slept, and had made use of the pen and ink.

Olive crossed the room to the small table, and there found his suspicions confirmed. A pen was in the ink-stand, a sheet of note-paper was laid obtrusively athwart the blotting-pad. And on this sheet of note-paper was written in ink, not yet dry:

"A poor penitent, lying at the point of death at No. 11, Rue Corot, has a story to tell that may interest Lord Culvers."

CHAPTER XV.

CLIVE stood staring blankly at the mysterious words.

"A poor penitent!" "A story to tell!" What in Heaven's name did it mean?

Who could have entered the room while Lord Culvers slept, and have left a message whose full import it seemed impossible to gauge?

For that the story which might "interest Lord Culvers" had reference to their one pressing cause of anxiety, he did not for a moment doubt.

All his wonderings, however, had to be swept on one side unanswered, to make way for the more practical question, What was to be done for the best?

And to this question there seemed but one answer: "Go yourself without a moment's delay to No. 11, Rue Corot."

He threw one glance at Lord Culvers as he slept. His face, fitfully lighted by the one candle and the patch of light thrown by the outside gas-lamp, showed painfully worn and aged. It did not need a second glance to convince Olive that to awaken him and explain matters to him would mean not only delay in setting forth, but impediment to progress afterwards if, in his present nerveless, spiritless condition, he should insist on accompanying him.

"And how thankful he will be to be spared as much exertion as possible!" thought the young man, as having folded and put away the sheet of note-paper, he softly closed the door behind him, and made his way down the stairs.

He did not stop to interrogate the waiters as to who had entered his sitting-room during his absence.

"Where would be the use?" he said to himself, as he called a voiture, and desired the man to drive him to the Rue Corot; "the message was the thing, the messenger mattered but little."

Oddly enough, with the thought of the messenger there came into his mind a recollection of the sweet, careworn face of which he had caught a passing glimpse under a Salvationist poke-bonnet.

With his curiosity intensified to burning-point by his anxieties, the wings of the wind would have seemed a tardy means of conveyance to his destination; so it was scarcely surprising that the jolting voiture with its sorry horse taxed his patience to its utmost limits.

The Rue Corot lies in the unfashionable quarter of the Porte Saint Martin, in close vicinity to the Théâtre Beaumarchais. It is a narrow and somewhat noisy thoroughfare of tall seven-storied houses

that are let and sublet to all sorts and conditions of men.

Olive dismissed his voiture at the corner of the street, and found No. 11 for himself. The door was open, no porter was in attendance, and the entrance seemed all in darkness.

It was not until he had his foot absolutely on the first of the narrow flight of stairs, that he realised the awkwardness of his position in coming to a house to enquire for a sick person without knowledge of either the name or the sex of the individual.

Half-way up the stairs he had to draw back to the wall to allow a young woman to pass. She appeared to be of the sempstress or shop-attendant class, and was smartly dressed, as if for a café chantant, or some other bourgeois place of entertainment.

Olive seized his opportunity, and, lifting his hat, asked the girl if she could tell him if any one were ill in the house.

"Mais oui, M'sieu," she replied; "c'est la pauvre Marie Schira qui va mourir."

"Marie Schira."

Olive repeated the name to himself once or twice, and then remembered that he had seen it frequently on Parisian play-bills.

Now what in the name of all that was wonderful could such a person as Marie Schira know or have to tell about such a one as Ida Culvers?

He ventured to address another question or two to the girl, and elicited the fact that Marie Schira, while dressing in her tiny dressing-room behind the scenes at the Théâtre Beaumarchais, had set her gaus sleeve on fire with the candles on her table, and, before assistance could be procured, had been so severely burned that her life was despaired of. This had happened three nights ago.

It was an awkward place for a colloquy this, on a small landing in the middle of a flight of stairs lighted only by a dim oil-lamp on a very high bracket. Yet Olive hazarded one more question.

"On which floor were Mademoiselle Schira's rooms? Was there any one there who could receive him?"

The young girl eyed him dubiously for a moment, as if wondering over the motive for his questions concerning a person of whom he evidently knew next to nothing.

She, however, answered him politely that Marie Schira's rooms were on the floor above the one on which they stood; that

Marie had a sister who had been summoned from England, and who was in attendance on her night and day. This sister was a member of a religious order, and wore a big "chapeau comme ça"—here the girl with her finger as nearly as possible described the shape of a coal-scuttle in the air. If she were out there would be sure to be some one else in attendance on Marie, for she was never left alone.

Then the girl wished him good evening, and passed down the stairs.

The "chapeau comme ça" at once conjured up to Olive's fancy a vision of a Salvation Army poke-bonnet and a sweet, careworn face beneath it. He wondered if the bearer of the mysterious message stood revealed.

When he knocked at one of two doors that faced him on the second floor, the "some one else" left in charge of Marie Schira proved to be an elderly woman of most untidy appearance, with a yellow handkerchief tied over her head.

Her French was alarmingly bourgeois, and her sentences ran one into the other with such rapidity as to be almost unintelligible.

Olive could just make out that Marie was suffering agonies; that delirium had set in, and that it was not likely she would live till morning.

Would M'sieu enter and sit down in the salon? Marie's sister, who had gone out early in the afternoon, would no doubt soon return and be able to answer any questions.

As she finished speaking the woman opened a door-adjointing the one at which she stood, and showed Olive into a room dimly lighted by a single candle in a girandole over the mantelpiece.

He conjectured that a door on one side of the fireplace led into the room of the sufferer, for he presently heard the woman's voice on the other side of it, together with what he fancied to be the creaking of an iron bedstead. It seemed as if the poor girl were tossing restlessly on her couch of pain, for presently he heard a faint moan, followed at an interval by a low, incoherent muttering.

It was a dreary waiting-time, this, that had its dreariness doubled and trebled by the fear lest even as he sat there the dying girl might pass away with the story it behoved him to hear untold.

His eye wandered round the dimly-lighted room. It was of the type one might expect as the half-salon, half-salle-à-

manger of an actress not at the head of her profession.

A general air of gaudiness prevailed. There was plenty of gilding and bright colour in the furniture, but nowhere the touch of faintness and order that proclaims the gentlewoman's sitting-room.

Side by side with the gaudiness and untidiness, there lingered pathetic traces of the sad episode that was ending poor Marie's career. A heavy cloak flung over the back of a chair, with its lining burned away, proclaimed the last service it had rendered to its owner. A pair of tiny, silver-trimmed slippers, scorched and blackened, lay beside it on the floor. A portrait of Marie Schira, that of a beaming, brilliant brunette, smiled down from an opposite wall on these tokens of the last tragedy in which she had played her part; and on a table immediately beneath this portrait the light of the one candle found out the diamonds in a massive gold bracelet, which lay side by side with a broken fan and a withered bouquet of carnations.

A step on the outside landing made Olive turn his head towards the door, which he had left slightly ajar. Presently a man's head, with a hat on, looked in, and as hurriedly withdrew. Olive had a good memory for faces, and, alight as was the glimpse he had of this one, it recalled that of one of the two men who had passed him on the previous day in the Rue Vervieu, and whose remark respecting Captain Oulvers he had overheard.

The fact struck him as strange. He might have doubted the evidence of his eyesight, if it had not, a moment after, been corroborated by a voice in the adjoining room, whose tones he at once identified with those of the man who had animadverted upon Captain Oulvers's liking for the "two B's."

"Who is that man in there?" were the words that Olive heard in French, that had an unmistakable English flavour to it. "Has Mattie sent for him? or what does he want?"

The woman's reply did not reach Olive's ear.

Then the opening and shutting of a door, and the sound of heavy footsteps descending the stairs, told him that the man had departed.

Half an hour, marked by the jarringly merry chimes of a showy ormolu clock on the mantelpiece, slowly told itself out, and

then there came the sound of other and lighter footsteps on the outer landing, followed once more by the opening and shutting of the door of the adjoining room.

"Mary, my poor child!" were the words that reached Olive now; "let me raise your pillows. It is I—your own Mattie back again."

It was said in English, and in sweet, low tones, that might have been a lady's.

Three minutes after, the door that divided the salon from the bedroom was softly opened, and Olive, looking up, saw standing, framed as it were in the doorway, the figure of a woman in a straight black gown, and with a black poke-bonnet on her head. Beneath the bonnet showed the sweet, careworn face of which he had caught a glimpse at the door of the hotel.

The woman closed the door behind her, and advanced into the dim room.

"Are you Lord Culvers, sir?" she asked. "It is very good of you to come. I suppose you saw my message on the writing-table? I did not like to disturb the gentleman asleep in the easy-chair, so I ventured to make use of the pen and ink I saw there."

Olive explained that he was not Lord Culvers, but one of his most intimate friends, and that any story Marie Schira or her friends might have to tell, they might rely upon it would be faithfully and literally transmitted by him to Lord Culvers.

The woman kept her eyes fixed on him as he spoke.

"I fear it is too late, sir," she said, sadly. "Since I went out this afternoon a sad change has set in, and I fear my poor sister will carry her story into the grave with her. Something has been preying on her mind for days past—something in connection with the name of Culvers, which has been very often on her lips in her delirium. I would have gone to you sooner if it had been possible."

"But have you no idea what has been preying on her mind?" asked Olive, eagerly. "Can you conjecture nothing, absolutely nothing, as to the story she wished to tell Lord Culvers?"

"I will tell you all I know, sir, with pleasure," she answered. "But it is very little. Till I was fetched from my work in London the other day I had not seen Mary for years. I had prayed night and day that the lost sheep might be brought back to the Fold; but——"

"Can you tell me who the man was who came in and went out about half an hour ago?" interrupted Olive, eager to snatch at any and every scattered thread that presented itself, in hopes that thus he might unravel something of the mystery which seemed to deepen at every turn.

"My brother John, sir, I suppose," she answered. "There are three of us—Mary, John, and Martha—that's me. Holy names these, sir; but, alas! they have been but unworthily borne."

It was between pious ejaculations so charged with deep feeling, that on her lips they became a prayer, that Olive gathered fragments of the family history of the bearers of these "holy names" that enabled him to understand something of the condition of things he was now called upon to face.

John had begun life as a stable help, from that he had risen to be a head groom. After that his career had become dubious. He had fallen into bad company, taken to gambling and betting, and for years his family had seen nothing of him.

Mary, a beautiful but frivolous girl, had run away from home, when little more than a child, to join a company of strolling players, and for years she, too, had been a stranger to her family and friends. Subsequently, John, in his somewhat vagrant career, had lighted upon her on the race-course at Chantilly with her first name Frenchified, and the family patronymic of Skinner Italianised into Schira. Under this nom de guerre she had made something of a reputation as an actress of low comedy parts at an inferior theatre.

Of herself Miss Skinner said nothing. Her straight black gown, and poke-bonnet, seemed sufficiently to tell her story.

She ended her fragmentary scraps of her family history in a faltering voice, and with eyes that swam in tears.

"I pray for the two night and day, sir," she said, clasping her hands together, "without ceasing, I beseech the Good Shepherd to——"

"But," interrupted Olive, anxious to bring her back to the point where his interest was keenest, "did your sister on your arrival here give you no hint as to what was on her mind?"

"I know up to a certain point, sir. When I first arrived here, although she was suffering terribly, there was no fever on her, and she could talk calmly at intervals. In her sleep she used to mutter

a good deal about some diamonds which, she seemed to fear, might get her and some one else into trouble."

Clive gave a great start.

"Diamonds!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir. So once, when she seemed suffering a little less, I asked her if she had anything in her possession that did not rightfully belong to her. At first she refused to answer; but when I spoke to her about the great judgement seat before which she must shortly stand, she grew frightened, and told me to fetch her a certain box out of one of her drawers. I did so, and found in it a magnificent diamond brooch that had had some of its stones removed. This she desired me to take to the church of the Carmelites on Sunday, and put into the offertory bag. It would then, she said, no doubt, get back to its rightful owner, for there had been advertisements out offering a large reward for it."

"But did she give you no idea how the brooch came into her possession?" exclaimed Clive.

It was hard to be brought, thus to the edge of an explanation, and then be left as much in the dark as ever.

"None whatever, sir, and she grew so rapidly worse that it became impossible to question her. In her delirium the name of Culvers was very often on her lips. I spoke to John about this, and told him also about the brooch, and what I had done with it. Upon this he was very angry; he called me a fool, and said that if I had given the brooch to him he would have returned it to Lord Culvers, and had five hundred pounds for his pains."

"And does John know nothing of how your sister obtained the brooch?"

"He says not, sir, and flies into a passion whenever I mention it to him. And although my poor sister has again and again in her delirium muttered the name of Culvers, she has never again alluded to the brooch. Last night, as I watched beside her, she muttered once or twice, 'send for him—send for him.' I could think of no one but Lord Culvers that she could wish sent for; so the first thing this morning I went to John, and asked him if he knew Lord Culvers's address so that I might telegraph to him Mary's wish to see him, for I could not tell what might lie behind it. John was rough, and refused me any information. One of John's associates, however, a man who once or twice has been moved by the Lord

to show me a kindness, followed me down the stairs from John's rooms, and told me that Lord Culvers would be in Paris to-day, and most likely at the Hôtel Bristol in the afternoon."

Mystery seemed increasing upon mystery.

"Who was that man? How on earth could he know anything of Lord Culvers's movements?" exclaimed Clive.

"I don't know, sir. His name is Johnson; off and on he is a good deal with John. I wish I could tell you more, sir. Mary seemed slightly better, and was sleeping quietly when I went out this afternoon, and I was hoping that she might have rallied enough to explain matters to you; but alas! while I was away a change set in, and I fear now that she will carry her secret into the grave with her."

It was a long story. Clive had listened to it with the closest attention, summing up, meanwhile, in an undercurrent of thought, its many and diverse details, weighing them, as it were, in order to discover what bearing they might have on the main facts.

"I must see your brother," he said, as she finished speaking, "and ask him a few questions. Give me his address, that is if you do not expect him back again here shortly."

Miss Skinner shook her head.

"I may not see him for days, sir," she answered, "unless I go to him, and then, most likely, I shall find him sound asleep, for he is up half the night and in bed half the day."

Then she fetched pen and ink and wrote her brother's address upon a slip of paper.

"I have done my best, sir," she said, as she handed it to Clive and noted his dissatisfied expression of countenance. "I have felt all through that a great deal lies behind all this; but how to get at it I do not know."

Clive needed no telling that a great deal lay behind the story he had just heard. Mystery seemed accumulating upon mystery; clouds seemed thickening, not lifting.

"I must go back to the sick-room now, sir," she said, after waiting a moment for an answer. "My poor Mary may want me. And I must pray—pray for the poor lost lamb to the very last. Will you care to wait here on the chance that a moment of consciousness may come to her, or will you go back?"

There could be but one answer to this

from Clive: he would wait hours, days, if need were, on the faintest chance of a word being spoken by Marie Schira that might throw light on her possession of Ida's diamonds.

There was, however, Lord Culvers to be thought of. So he borrowed pen and paper, and asked if a trusty messenger could be found.

Miss Skinner answered him that the watcher beside Marie's couch, who was going off duty now for the night, might be trusted to carry a note for him.

Clive, therefore, sent by her a brief line to Lord Culvers, telling him not to expect him till he saw him, as he had been detained on a matter of importance.

A dreary night's vigil he was to keep in that dim, silent room. The doctor came and the doctor went, saying that another six or eight hours would see the end of it, and telling Clive, as he passed through the outer room on his way downstairs, that, if he wanted to speak with Marie Schira, he might as well go home at once, for she would never again recover consciousness.

Nevertheless, Clive remained. After midnight outside noises died down and the silence deepened on the house within, a silence which, so far as he was concerned, was broken only by the merry chimes of the showy clock on the mantelpiece, the creaking of the bedstead in the adjoining room, and the moans of the poor sufferer.

And through it all—running, so to speak, as a soft, sad accompaniment to those moans of pain—went ceaselessly the prayers of the Sister kneeling beside the dying girl: "Spare her, good Lord! Have mercy upon her, a miserable sinner!"

CHAPTER XVI.

So Marie Schira passed away with her story untold.

The air struck chill to Clive as, weary and sad at heart, he made his way down the stairs and out into the silent streets in the grey of the early dawn.

In spite of the early hour, he found Lord Culvers dressed and seated at breakfast when he got back to the hotel. To Clive's fancy he looked far less dejected and spiritless than when he had left him overnight. To say truth, the old gentleman had ventured to build on Clive's prolonged absence hopes that the circumstances scarcely justified. He was naturally enough eager for an explanation.

The long, dreary explanation that Clive had to give killed those hopes one by one.

When it came to an end the two found themselves precisely where they had been on the preceding day, so far at least as the mystery of Ida's disappearance was concerned—at the end of a blind alley, as it were, with a blank wall facing them.

"The thing we have now to decide," said Clive, as he finished his story, "is whether it will be better for me to see and question this man, John Skinner, or whether it will be best to leave him to the police."

The matter was to be decided for them, for even as Clive said the words the door opened, and a waiter entered to say that a man, by name John Skinner, was below, and wished to see Lord Culvers.

"We must be on our guard against fraud with a man of his stamp," said Clive, as the waiter departed to show the man in.

Assuredly the personal appearance of John Skinner was not such as to inspire confidence. With his hat removed, he looked even less attractive than he had on the previous night. He was short in stature, with a flat head, small eyes, and hair, complexion, and whiskers of a sandy hue. The expression on his face was that of cunning of a low type combined with servility.

He looked from Lord Culvers to Clive, from Clive to Lord Culvers. Then he turned to the latter, saying:

"I was told you wished to see me, my lord."

Lord Culvers looked helplessly at Clive.

"Yes," said Clive, coming forward, and going straight to the point at once. "We have a question to ask you. How did a diamond brooch, the property of Lord Culvers's daughter, pass into the possession of your sister?"

The man did not immediately reply. A look of low cunning settled on his face. He made one step towards Lord Culvers.

"My lord," he said, "I have a question—an important one—to ask before I speak. I know that a handsome reward has been offered for the brooch, I want to know if there will be a reward—in proportion to that very handsome sum—for relating how that brooch got into a certain person's possession, and how it passed out of that person's possession into some one else's?"

"Oh-h," said Clive, contemptuously,

"it's a case of how much down, is it?"

Lord Culvers became greatly agitated.

"Speak out, don't talk in enigmas," he said. "Of course I'll pay for information that may be worth having. Who is that 'certain person'?"

"But we've yet to learn that this man's word is to be relied on," said Clive, even more contemptuously than before. "A man who sells information for so much down, is likely to manufacture as much as he can find a market for."

Again the man declined to answer Clive, and addressed Lord Culvers.

"You can test the truth of my statements in any way you please, my lord," he said; "but I don't open my lips till I find out if it'll be worth my while."

"How much do you want?" asked Lord Culvers, his agitation increasing on him.

For answer Skinner drew from his pocket a letter-case, from which he took some four or five slips of paper. These he spread before Lord Culvers, pointing with his finger to the name which signed each slip.

One and all these papers were headed with the formidable letters "I.O.U.," one and all they were signed with the name—"Sefton Culvers."

"A mere bagatelle, my lord," he said, flippantly; "in all something under five hundred pounds. But, small as it is, there's no chance of my getting it out of the Captain. He has threatened more than once to pitch me out of the window, or kick me downstairs, just for asking for it."

"I suppose there can be no doubt that this is Captain Culvers's writing?" said Clive, turning to Lord Culvers.

Lord Culvers vouched for the genuineness of the signatures.

"And not a doubt, sooner or later," he added, "I shall have to discharge these and considerably heavier liabilities for my nephew."

It was scarcely the time for parleying and bargaining; it seemed the wiser course to cut short delay and write a cheque at once for the amount.

"Now for your story," said Clive, impatiently interrupting the man's profuse and somewhat servile thanks.

The story was simple enough, and was given in one sentence:

"I was in the room when Captain Culvers took the brooch out of his pocket,

and gave it to Marie Schira, after a theatrical supper which the Captain gave in the Rue Verrien."

"Ah-h!"

And Lord Culvers's face expressed great amazement.

"Was any one else present?" asked Clive, thinking it might be as well to get the man's words verified.

"Only my chum, George Johnson, sir, who'll vouch for the truth of what I say. Marie went into raptures over the brooch, and asked the Captain where he had got such a pretty thing from. The Captain, half laughing, said that he had found it on the floor of a carriage, with its pin broken as she saw it. Upon which Marie laughed, and said whoever had dropped it would never see it again."

"On the floor of a carriage!" repeated Lord Culvers. "That may have been on his way back to Glynde Lodge after Ida left him."

"Marie was deeply in debt," Skinner went on, willing to tell any amount of secrets now that it had been made "worth his while" to do so. "I suspect that she herself removed the stones from the brooch, and disposed of them as best she could."

The explanation seemed feasible enough. It made plain to Clive that the name of Culvers so often on poor Marie's lips represented to her mind Sefton, not Sefton's uncle.

Lord Culvers, in great agitation, paced the room.

"I couldn't have believed it of Sefton—no, not if any one had sworn it!" he exclaimed. "One's own flesh and blood! After this, what may we not expect to hear?"

"So ends the episode of the diamond brooch," said Clive, bitterly, with an irritating recollection of the manner in which his father's sagacity had been led astray on the matter.

Then he turned to Skinner.

"You can go," he said, a little sharply. "Of course, we shall take care, one way or another, to get your statements verified."

But how much of verification either he or Lord Culvers judged necessary, may be gathered from the fact that, as the door closed on the man, they exclaimed simultaneously, as with one voice:

"Police enquiry on this matter must be stopped at once."

Personally, it would not have troubled

Clive one jot to have seen Sefton Culvers pilloried before the world, if only the man himself could have been detached from the name he bore. That name, however, at all costs had to be kept untarnished.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN the English mail came in that day, it brought with it for Clive the letter over which Juliet had spent so many hours.

He read it aloud to Lord Culvers from its first to its last word. It commenced with an earnest—one might almost say a heartbroken—entreaty that Clive would use his utmost endeavour to persuade Lord Culvers to call in the aid of the police, and to move heaven and earth to discover her darling sister. Her lips, unsealed now by terror as to what might be that sister's fate, told fully and freely the story of her own conjectures and fears, and then went on to explain the part she had already played in the matter.

"My impression, at first," she wrote, "was, that Ida and Sefton had had some desperate quarrel on their way to the churchyard, and that Ida had made the visit to mother's grave an excuse for escaping from him. I fancied that she had gone to the house of some people whom she had met in Florence, and whose exact address I did not know. I thought that possibly she was corresponding—circuitously, not giving her address—with Sefton, trying to make him come to terms—that is to say, trying to make him consent to her living apart from him, provided she handed over to him a large portion of her fortune. I fancied she would not write to father, for fear he should interfere, and insist on her giving in; but I expected a line from her at any moment, telling me what part I was to take in the matter. When none came, I concluded that she was afraid to write for fear Peggy or father might get hold of her letter, and so trace her out. Then there occurred to me a safe way in which we might carry on our correspondence—a way, indeed, which we had planned together in the old days, when we found out how fond Peggy was of peeping into our letters. You know our dear old Goody lives in a cottage overgrown with a big yellow rose. She hates Peggy like poison, and would lay down her life for Ida and me. More than once we have had our letters addressed to us at the cottage under cover to Goody.

"When Ida went off to Biarritz two years ago, we agreed on a signal that would tell her when we were at Dering, and she could write to me at Goody's cottage. It was that I should seal a letter or newspaper wrapper, or, in fact, anything I liked to send, with our grandmother's seal. That seal I always keep in my writing-desk and carry about with me. It is an amethyst, cut with a rose surrounded with the motto: 'Sub signo et sub rosa.' It is horrid to be driven to such devices, but, as you know, we girls were never safe from Peggy's prying eyes. I've known her take my blotting-paper to the looking-glass, and, in that fashion, read what and to whom I had written. So the idea occurred to me now, that, as I couldn't send Ida a letter sealed with grandmother's seal, if I put the motto of the seal as an advertisement in all the newspapers, it would be sure to catch her eye, tell her that we were at Dering, and that she could write to me anything she pleased under cover to Goody as before. This advertisement Arthur Glynde inserted at my request—you may have seen it—in all the leading English and Continental journals. No letter, however, has as yet come to me through Goody, and, though I stay on here on the chance of getting one, little by little all hope is leaving me. I am convinced now that my theory, from beginning to end, has been all wrong, and that Sefton is as much in the dark as I am as to Ida's fate. I am all terror and anxiety as to what has become of my darling sister.

"Oh, Clive, dear, dear Clive, I beg, I implore you, do not let my father hush the matter up any longer! I entreat you give him no rest till he has called in the aid of the police, and left not a stone unturned to end this fearful suspense.

"Only do this for me, and I shall be everlastingly grateful to you. I will do anything and everything that lies in my power to make you happy. I will—what more can I say!—at once release you from your engagement to me. I will promise never, under any circumstances, to become your wife; but will remain,

"Always your devoted, grateful friend,
"JULIET CULVERS."

Clive folded the letter and laid it on one side.

The writer and her more than half ironical promise of reward dwindled in importance before the communications she had had to make.

"The advertisements, of course, are accounted for now," said Clive, slowly; "but not Captain Culvers's keen interest in them. There's something that wants explanation there."

Lord Culvers grew thoughtful.

"Let me think," he said, presently. "Juliet's grandmother and Sefton's are one and the same person—my mother."

"Ah-h," said Clive, drawing a long breath, "and, naturally enough, to Sefton, as well as to Juliet, would come some of her jewellery. That is suggestive."

"I had entirely forgotten," Lord Culvers went on, "the seal to which Juliet refers. It was given to the girls, with a number of o'd trinkets, when they were little more than children."

"Similar trinkets may have been given to Sefton by his father."

"No doubt. Now I think of 'it, there was a ring—what became of it, I wonder? It was a jasper set with diamonds, a long, coffin-shaped thing. Let me think who had that!"

Not for worlds would Clive have interrupted Lord Culvers's train of thought now.

"Yes, I'm sure it was given to my brother—Sefton's father, that is," he said, after a moment's pause, "and now I think of it, there was some device on 'it—a rose, I fancy; but I can't be sure what the motto was. It would be very likely to be the same as on the seal. No doubt there was some reason for my mother's fancy for the device, or it may have been handed down to her."

"Sefton most probably received that ring from his father," said Clive, slowly summing up the case, as it were, and thinking out his ideas as he spoke them. "Now it is possible that he, in his turn, may have given the ring to some one else under circumstances that made the gift of importance;" he broke off for a moment, then added, with a sudden energy, "there is a great deal behind all this, I am convinced. I should like amazingly to know to whom, and under what circumstances, Captain Culvers has given that ring."

The questions to whom, and under what circumstances Sefton Culvers had given the ring, with its device of a rose, were to be answered in a manner Clive little expected, for at that moment the door opened, and Sefton himself entered the room.

Entered, not in his usual slow, languid manner, and with eye-glass ready to

uplift wherewith to stare out of countenance any one who presumed uninvited to address him; but with a hurried step, and with a white face, and eyes with a startled look in them as of a man suddenly sobered by astounding or terrible news.

He lost no time in greeting or handshaking, but going straight to Clive, laid his hand upon his arm, saying:

"Help me! I want your help."

Clive stared at him, his bright, prominent eyes seeming almost to start from his head. Help him! Why, if he had entered the room pistols in hand, and said, "Choose your weapon!" it would have seemed far more natural.

Sefton did not give him time to speak his astonishment. He drew a letter from his pocket, and bade him read it.

Its seal, though broken, showed plainly enough the device of a rose, surrounded by a motto. The envelope bore no postmark, and it was addressed to "Captain Culvers," in Ida's handwriting.

"It was left at my rooms about half an hour ago—but by whom I haven't the remotest idea," continued Sefton.

Clive tore the letter from its envelope, and read as follows:

"Alta Lauria.

"Come without a moment's delay, and receive back your ring from dying hands.

"IDA."

The paper dropped from his nerveless hand.

"Does it mean——" he began, hoarsely, and then his own words seemed to choke him.

Lord Culvers picked up the letter and read it, then he, too, turned a white, stricken face towards Sefton.

"Tell us, quickly, for Heaven's sake!" cried Clive, "does she refer to her wedding-ring, or to what?"

He had thought that the mere sight of Ida's writing once more would be bound to send them all down on their knees in gratitude to Heaven; but there was nothing to thank Heaven for in such a letter as this.

Sefton answered slowly and gloomily:

"I know no more than you do to what ring she refers, whether to her wedding-ring or to the ring which sealed that letter, and which was given by me to—to some one else. Nor do I know whether the dying hands she speaks of are her own or that other person's. I only know for certain that Alta Lauria is the last place in the world for my wife to be in—for special

reasons—reasons that you must know now—that I must tell——”

He broke off abruptly, he was evidently driving himself to speak.

“Never mind about your special reasons,” said Clive, brusquely, “tell us where this place is, and how we can get to it without a moment's delay.”

“Unfortunately there must be hours of delay before we can even start for it. It is in Calabria, among the mountains, and not a train will leave for Naples before six to-night. I know the road to that accursed place only too well,” said Sefton, gloomily as before.

“Sefton, answer me this,” said Lord Culvers, in an agitated tone. “Was the person to whom you gave that ring a woman, and was your faith due to her?”

Sefton turned and faced him defiantly.

“Don't ask me any questions,” he said, fiercely. “I'll tell you all—all, that is, you need know. It's a long story; but, unfortunately, there's time enough and to spare to tell it before we can start.”

But Clive had to be convinced of this—had to fetch and to study railway guides, and maps, and lines of route before he could be persuaded that a weary three hours must elapse before they could so much as take the first step in a journey that might end Heaven only knew how.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEFTON'S story, told in short, abrupt sentences, and with as little detail as possible, was, after all, nothing more than the old one of plighted faith and broken troth, that the world has heard so often.

It dated eighteen months back, when Captain Culvers had returned with his regiment from India. He had arrived in England in the middle of a bleak English March, and had been advised by his doctors not to attempt to face it in his enfeebled state of health, but to start at once for the south of Europe. Accordingly, with a brother officer, he had set off on a tour through south Italy, intending to make Naples his head-quarters, and thence diverge a little out of the beaten track of the tourist into less frequented regions. At Naples, however, his brother officer had caught the Neapolitan fever, and, after a time, had been compelled to return to England. So Sefton continued his excursions without companionship. After scouring the Abruzzi, he had diverged into Calabria, and, in spite of

bad roads, miserable inns, and fever in all directions, had penetrated into the mountainous region of La Sila.

And here, in the heart of the country where the bandit, “Peter the Calabrian,” self-styled “Emperor of the Mountains, and King of the Woods,” had held alike his camp and his court, and where Peter's descendants and representatives lead as marauding and indolent a life as modern Italian civilisation permits, Sefton fell ill with fever, and went nigh to losing his life. His quarters were a miserable hut—miscalled inn—on the edge of the forest whence Peter and his co-marauders used to emerge to strike terror into the heart of wayfarers. There was no doctor within twenty miles—a distance doubled by the rocky roads. The people of the inn, therefore, called in to his aid the wise woman of the place—a certain Francesca Xardex, who, with remedies assuredly not to be found in any modern Pharmacopœia, brought him back to health.

This Francesca Xardex was a person of no small importance in Alta Lauria, the mountain-hamlet where Sefton had fallen ill. To begin with, chance had put her in the way of receiving a better education than generally falls to the lot of the Italian peasant. Also in her young days she had been something of a traveller, and had visited several of the cities of Continental Europe.

Thirdly and lastly, and what added most to her prestige among the rough mountaineers, she was foster-mother to the only child of the chief landowner in the place, the Marchese da Nava; her husband was the Marchese's head-belliff, her six sons were shepherds, vine-dressers, or in some other way employed upon his estate.

In addition, her nurse-child, Violante, was devotedly attached to her.

This Marchese da Nava was a widower, and a man close upon seventy years of age, when Sefton visited Alta Lauria. Late in life he had married a peasant girl in the place, who had died, leaving him with this one child, Violante.

Although feudalism has been banished from Italy, the feudal spirit survives in the wilder and more mountainous regions. The bond between peer and peasant in parts of Calabria is of a kind to which northern Europe offers no parallel. The Marchese was poor as a Marchese could well be, for his large estates consisted to a great extent of exhausted mines, hill

pasture-land, and mountains, sloping down in ridges to the dense forests of gigantic oleander, arbutus, and wild olive, which cover the sites of forgotten battle-fields. He was also a man of ungovernable temper; his household was ill-arranged and disorderly, and his sense of obligation as a land-owner nil. Nevertheless, the devotion of the peasantry to him was unswerving, and his will as much a law to them as if it had been passed into one by Senate, and would be put into force by Carabiniere.

As for Violante, she was simply the darling and the idol of these rude mountaineers. With a temper nearly as violent as her father's, she combined a beauty met with nowhere save in the mixed races of Magna Græcia. Ill-trained, and all but uneducated, she had grown up among them half-princess, half-peasant, related on her father's side to some of the noblest houses in Italy, and owning on her mother's side to near relatives among the poorest and most debased of the vine-dressers and shepherds of Alta Lauria. She was one with the peasants in all their joys and sorrows, and it was no unusual thing for this last representative of a race that had held sway in the district for centuries, to be seen in her foster-mother's cottage eating macaroni and drinking wine side by side with her foster-brothers, Giorno the vine-dresser, or Pippo the little goat-herd.

It was no wonder that when Francesca was called in to administer her remedies to the handsome young Englishman, Violante should accompany her, nor that, later on, when the Englishman, restored to health, called on his skilful doctress to offer her his thanks, Violante should have been found in the cottage eating eggs and vermicelli with her peasant foster-brothers.

On the fascination which this beautiful half-educated girl soon grew to have for him Sefton touched but lightly. It was, on his side, a delirium that came to an end with the summer's moon under which it had had its birth. While it lasted, however, it led him over the bounds of prudence, and he accepted an invitation from the Marchese to make the Palazzo his head-quarters, and thence visit the places of interest in the neighbourhood.

And before the first week of his visit had come to an end, he had made Violante an offer of marriage which, with her father's approval, she had accepted.

Then with a start he had awakened

from his dream of passion, and told himself what a fool he had been to think of introducing the ill-trained, half-educated, and penniless Violante to his aristocratic English friends as his wife. He set his wits to work to find a way out of the entanglement, and could see one only—flight. That even to be accomplished successfully had to be craftily contrived, for he had no mind to run the gauntlet of the stilettoes or bullets of Violante's numerous foster-brothers or half-savage cousins. So, under pretext of a journey to England to prepare his mother to receive his beautiful bride, he had said good-bye to the Marchese and Violante, begging them during his absence to make all preparations for the wedding-day, and promising a speedy return.

That promise, it need scarcely be said, had never been fulfilled.

After his flight from Alta Lauria, Captain Culvers had remained for some months in Paris, and there had drifted into dissipations that had left an indelible mark on his character. For some time after his return to England he had lived in the expectation of the story of the Calabrian episode in some way or other becoming known, and of his character suffering accordingly.

It was under the influence of this feeling that he had resigned his commission. When, however, a year passed by, and Violante's friends made no sign, he concluded that the matter had blown over, and did his best to dismiss it from his thoughts.

He ended his story, saying that he had never in remotest fancy connected Ida's disappearance with this episode in his life; nor could he in any way explain how nor by whom she had been inveigled into that "accursed Alta Lauria—a nest of wild, hot-blooded ruffians."

With reference to Ida's disappearance, his impression from first to last had been either that she and Juliet were playing off some trick on him, doing their utmost, in fact, to make him look like a fool, or else that Ida, having come to the conclusion that married life with him would be an impossibility, had taken the first step in a plan which she and Juliet had arranged together, and of which he would hear more anon. He would give his "word of honour" that this was the simple truth so far as he was concerned.

The phrase, his "word of honour," came jarringly as "Finis" to such a narrative.

For a few minutes there fell a dead silence in the room—a silence, however, which, to Sefton's fancy, seemed charged with the contempt and scorn that not a doubt his two hearers felt for him.

Lord Culvers was the first to break that silence.

"My dead brother's only son!" was all he said by way of comment on the tale.

He did not hurl the words at his nephew, challenging reply and defence; they came rather as the words of a sigh that could not be repressed.

Sefton turned upon him fiercely.

"Surrounded with such a set of desperate ruffians, there was no course but fight open to me. You, yourself, in the circumstances, would have done precisely the same thing."

Clive felt that it was not the time for either attack or defence. His business training and daily companionship with his father had taught him one thing if nothing else: that to lose self-control at a crisis in affairs, meant to let go the helm and let the vessel drive.

"The most terrible part of the whole thing is that Ida should be in the midst of such a den at the present moment," he interposed, hurriedly. "We must put every thought but this out of our minds."

Personally he felt such a course to be imperative. Here was he compelled, by force of circumstances, to act the comrade to a man whom he would have delighted to call a scoundrel to his face. Once give his tongue license, and that comradeship must collapse.

Lord Culvers made no reply. He was wandering slowly, helplessly almost, round the room, collecting papers and other of his possessions, with which he had littered Clive's sitting-room earlier in the day.

It was easy to see his intention.

"You wouldn't be fit for it. You'd break down before we got across the frontier," said Sefton, a little roughly, but not unkindly.

"It will be easy to telegraph to you daily—every few hours, if you like—and then you can follow us step by step, as it were," said Clive.

And then, taking out his pencil, with Sefton's aid he jotted down various stations from which they could despatch their telegrams, and where also they could receive them should need arise.

Lord Culvers allowed himself to be persuaded. To impede the young men at

such a time—would have been sheer folly; and it was impossible to disguise even from himself the fact that in his present depressed and nervous condition, he could be nothing but an impediment to them.

"And there is something to be done in Paris," pursued Clive, anxious once more to rouse Lord Culvers from his depression by turning his attention to the practical details of the "situation." "The Prefect of Police, not a doubt, must be told of the turn affairs have taken; he may have suggestions to make that may be of value to us—you can telegraph them to us, you know, at one of the stations we have named."

Sefton, at any rate, had a suggestion to make to Clive as he strapped together his hand-portmanteau, and he made it in a voice so low that it did not reach Lord Culvers's ear. It was:

"Whatever you do or don't take with you, don't forget your revolver. Mine is in my breast-pocket."

As the train by which Clive and Sefton started on the first stage of their journey was about to move from the platform, two persons, hurriedly passing through the barrier, swung themselves into a third-class compartment. One of these two was a man of about five-and-twenty, a handsome, reckless, insolent-looking young fellow, wearing a slouch hat and a gay necktie; the other was a black-eyed, olive-skinned boy, with a barrel-organ and a monkey.

CHAPTER XIX.

"MOTHER, it is done—Jullet will be happy. Oh, that I could lie down to rest beside you now!"

These were the words with which Ida laid her bridal flowers on her mother's grave.

Then bowing her head on a corner of the marble monument, her tears fell thick and fast upon the white slab on which it rested.

The sacrifice she had planned was finished; her nerves had been as steel and her heart as stone till her self-imposed obligation had been fulfilled to its uttermost letter. Now the inevitable reaction was setting in, and she was beginning to count the cost of what she had done.

And the cost, when counted, could be summed up in a sentence—the happiness of her life to its very last hour.

The renunciation of Clive and his love had been bitter enough; but even that to her fancy now counted as nothing beside

the terrible bondage into which she had voluntarily entered by becoming the wife of a man for whom she had neither liking nor respect.

When she had played the part of a scornful, cold-hearted maiden, and had sent Clive from her side to pay court to Juliet, and also, later on, when, in order to put Juliet's happiness beyond a doubt, she had consented to marry Sefton, she had said to herself:

"What does anything in life matter, so long as those two are happy!"

Now, however, as she faced the fact that nothing but death could release her from the fealty which she had just vowed to a man whom she thoroughly despised, her heart failed her, and she stood appalled at the thought of the dreary years that stretched before her—a "life of night with never a hope of dawn."

It was no wonder, with thoughts such as these, that her tears should fall thick and fast; nor that she should moan to the mother who had been laid to rest so long ago: "Would that I were lying beside you now!"

The sunshine gleamed whitely on the many tombstones. A light breeze, fresh with the salt of the sea, fanned the hillside, and ruffled the long grasses amid which she stood. A lark rose from the turf, and went soaring upwards into the "living blue," high and higher, till it became literally a "sightless song." A woman rose slowly from a gravestone on which she was seated a few yards distant, and, with a slow, hesitating tread, drew near the sorrowing girl.

Ida had been so absorbed in her own sad thoughts as she had made her way towards her mother's grave, that she had not noticed a group of three persons seated among the tombstones, who had started, and then exchanged glances one with the other at her approach.

A picturesque group these three made among the white tombstones and tall, flowering grasses. The woman, who was about forty-five years of age, was dark-skinned and handsome, with the beauty of South Italy; she was dressed in a pretty peasant's costume—a dark-blue skirt with broad orange border, and wore on her head a white panni-cloth. Beside her, lounging on the grass, was a fine-featured, insolent-looking young man, with gay necktie, and slouch hat tilted over his eyes to keep out the dazzling sunshine. A little in the rear of these two, a black-

eyed, olive-skinned boy stood resting his barrel-organ against some iron railings that enclosed a monument, and on his organ was perched a monkey, gravely munching a green apple.

These three persons were Francesca Xardez, Giorno her eldest son, and Pippo her youngest.

Pippo had leaned forward, touched his mother's shoulder, and whispered in her ear as Ida approached, and passed within a few yards of them. Upon which Francesca had started, and exclaimed, "O gran cielo! Non è possibile!" and then she had risen to her feet, and with slow, hesitating steps, had made her way towards the young lady.

Ida did not turn her head until she heard a deep voice saying, at her elbow, in Italian:

"This is fate! Signora, can you understand me?"

Ida understood her easily enough. Her recent frequent visits to Italy to study art had familiarised her with the Italian language.

She naturally enough concluded that the woman was begging, and, wishing to keep her own sad solitude unbroken, took out her purse at once, and offered her some money.

Francesca shook her head.

"Not that from you!" she exclaimed. "It is not possible. I saw you married this morning to a man who—" she broke off abruptly, then again asked the question: "Signora, do you understand me?"

Ida was startled, her curiosity was excited to a painful degree.

"A man who—what?" she asked, continuing the conversation in Italian. "Yes, I understand you easily—finish what you were going to say."

Francesca looked at her steadily.

"Yes, it is fate," she said, in the same slow, deep tones as before. "I saw you this morning in your beautiful white dress, and I said to myself, 'I see her once now, and I see her no more again for ever,' and lo, Fate sends me here to rest among the graves, and then sends you here with your beautiful flowers, and we meet!"

Ida grew impatient.

"If you have anything to say to me you must say it quickly," she said, "for I cannot spare you many minutes."

"And when you have heard what I have to tell, you will say, 'would that Heaven had smitten my ears with deafness before they had listened to such a tale.'"

Ida grew white.

"What is it—tell me quickly," she said; "is it anything about—Captain Culvers?"

The words "my husband" would not come to her lips.

Francesca's swarthy face flushed with anger at the mention of the name. "Signora," she said, in low but vehement tones, "if that man had his due it would be a stiletto into his heart. Ah, I would that I had dealt him his death-blow, instead of bringing him back to life to play the lover and the traitor." She spoke in such hurried, passionate tones, that it was with difficulty that Ida caught her meaning.

"You must speak slowly and quietly if you want me to understand you," she said, feeling that behind all this passion and vehemence there no doubt lay something which it behoved her to know.

Then Francesca, controlling herself with difficulty, told the story of Sefton Culvers's visit to Calabria.

It was carried beyond the point at which Sefton had left it in his narrative to Lord Culvers and Olive, and told of events that had occurred after his departure from Alta Lauria.

First in order had ensued the death of the Marchese. This had happened within a month after Sefton had left the place, and had overwhelmed Violante with grief; a grief that had increased upon her to the detriment of her health as the weeks passed by and there came no tidings of her absent lover. Sefton had been very cautious in giving information to Violante and her father respecting himself and his family, and the only address he had left with her was at an hotel in London where he occasionally stayed. To that hotel again and again Violante addressed imploring letters, to which, as a matter of course, there came no reply.

At first the girl had found it impossible to realise that the man in whom she had so implicitly trusted had proved false, and that deliberate insult was intended to one of her name and race. She insisted on believing that some accident had befallen him, and announced her intention of setting off for England to ascertain if such were the case. Illness prevented her putting her intention into execution; malarial fever, always prone to attack the weak and ailing, seized her, and for some time her life was despaired of. Even after the fever had run its course and she had been pronounced convalescent, it did not

need a skilled eye to see that her constitution had been seriously undermined. A great lassitude took possession of her; she ate next to nothing, living entirely on granita and fruit; took no exercise, and showed no interest whatever in the people and things around her. Then it was that Francesca had thought that the time to act had come. She had been the one who had brought the man back to life to act the part of lover and traitor, she would be the one to hunt him down, find out the truth about him, and— Here Francesca broke off abruptly, furtively glancing into Ida's eyes, which, during the whole of the story, had not once been lifted from her face.

She resumed her narrative at another point, telling of the difficulty with which they had got together sufficient money for the journey. How that Violante had given her every penny she had in the world in order to buy Pippo an organ, with which it was hoped the scanty purse might be eked out, and how that Giorno's passage to Inghilterra had been clubbed together for by his fellow vine-dressers, who one and all would willingly have laid down their lives to give their darling young lady the desire of her heart.

Francesca had a relative in London who was an ice and sweetmeat seller. To his house the three made their way first on their arrival in England, and, thanks to his good offices and the use of an Army List and a Burke's Peerage, they succeeded in coming upon the traces of Captain Culvers. At least, so far as to ascertain that he had resigned his commission in the Army, and that he had near relatives who owned to a country house at Dering and a town house in Belgrave Square.

Then it was that Pippo and his organ had become useful. The little fellow, with his handsome face and merry ways, managed to win favour with the servants of Lord Culvers's town household, and found out through them that Captain Culvers would shortly be married at Hastings to his cousin.

After ascertaining full particulars of this wedding, the three had started for Hastings. They did not, however, succeed in reaching the church until the service had begun and the doors were closed. So they had stood in the porch waiting till the ceremony was over, and there had seen the bride pass out of the church and down the steps to her carriage.

Then they had wandered away among

the tombs at the back of the church, there to eat their frugal meal of bread and cheese. And to hold council with each other, too, it seemed, for, until Ida's unexpected appearance, they had been absorbed in earnest, low-voiced talk, in which Giorno's deep bass voice seemed to take a leading part.

"We will not lose sight of him. If she dies let him look out—that's all," Giorno was saying at the moment that Pippo touched his mother's shoulder and warned her of Ida's approach.

"His bride," thought the woman. "Shall they love, shall they be happy? Ah, I will plant the seeds of strife between them, and, please the saints, they will grow!" And then she had crossed the churchyard and had accosted the young lady.

Ida had listened to the tale, saying never a word, her face growing white and whiter, her features seeming to harden as if they were being turned into stone.

Then a great wave of indignation swept over her.

This the man whom she had vowed to love and honour, to cleave to till death parted them! Impossible! If there were no other way, death should part them at once.

But there was another way. It did not for a moment occur to her to go back to her father and insist on a separation from her newly-made husband.

No, she could not see her father arranging such a separation, although easily enough she could picture him endeavouring to patch up a peace between Sefton and herself, and doing his utmost to induce them to live together as husband and wife.

Her hope of deliverance seemed to lie in another quarter. She would go at once straight to Alta Lauria to the discarded Violante, and ask her to receive as her guest one who was more unhappy in her widowhood than was the girl in her slighted maidenhood. To Violante's presence she would summon her father to hear the girl's story from her own lips. And Sefton likewise should be summoned, and there, face to face with the two women he had wronged, he should be made to sign a deed of separation that would guarantee to his wife her freedom to the last hour of her life.

The mere thought of her possible release from bondage set the blood dancing in her veins, and brought back the colour to her cheek.

Francesca heard, with unconcealed amazement, of the young lady's resolve. For a moment she said nothing. Then, pointing to Giorno, still lying on the grass with his hat tilted over his eyes, she said that she must go and consult her son as to whether the thing were possible.

There had followed a short whispered colloquy between the two, at the end of which Francesca had come back, saying respectfully that if the young lady would trust herself to her guidance, she would conduct her safely to Alta Lauria.

Then had succeeded a necessary arrangement of plans. Pippo was despatched to see if Captain Culvers were still patiently awaiting his bride in the street below, and Ida and Francesca, leaving the churchyard by its back entrance, had made their way along by-streets to the church of "Saint Mary, Star of the Sea," whither Pippo had directions to follow them.

It was in the church of "Saint Mary, Star of the Sea," that Ida, tearing a leaf from her note-book, had written the hurried line to her father which Pippo had carried to Glynde Lodge.

There, too, they had arranged the successive steps of their journey. Ida would travel alone to London, leaving by a train from Hastings station, not Saint Leonard's, where her maid was awaiting her. An excursion train, Francesca said, left in an hour or so, and in the crowd and hurry that usually attends the departure of such a train, it was not likely that the quietly-dressed young lady would attract attention.

Once in London, with a thick veil, a long cloak, and—necessary item!—a full purse, no difficulties in the way of a journey to South Italy had need to be anticipated.

CHAPTER XX.

IDA'S spirit and determination held out as far as to Naples. Then the fatigue and excitement of the journey began to tell upon her, her strength gave way, and she was confined to her bed for nearly a week in the quiet hotel where she had taken up her quarters.

Throughout that week Francesca waited on her with unremitting attention and the respectful solicitude of an attached maid.

During the long hours of the wakeful nights the girl's resolution began somewhat to waver, and she asked herself one or two questions, to which it was not easy to find satisfactory answers. Such as:

Was this hurried flight and impetuous action altogether the best way of meeting difficulties which she could not deny she had brought upon herself? Would it not have been wiser to have taken time to consider the matter, and have called into counsel some older and wiser head than her own?

It seemed impossible, however, to answer these questions with either a yea or a nay; so she put them on one side, telling herself that she had gone too far to retreat now. It was altogether too late to think of retracing her steps. It would seem puerile to her father and her friends if she were to return, having accomplished but half of her journey and her purpose. It would be, in fact, tantamount to a confession of her own inability to manage her own affairs; and she must be prepared to see them taken out of her hands and managed for her.

So as soon as her strength rallied somewhat, she set off on the other half of her journey, making Francesca understand that the more quickly it was got through the better pleased she would be.

From Naples they went direct to Cosenza, and thence they diverged through a nest of small villages into the district dominated by the Sila Mountains, among which Alta Lauria is situated.

The country through which she travelled was new to her, and at any other time she would have been enchanted alike with its majestic grandeur and its desolation. Now, however, with the pressure of conflicting thoughts distracting her, both were lost upon her.

Three days of continuous and tiring travel gave her her first view of the Palazzo of Alta Lauria, crushed in, as it were, between stupendous rocks, high over a well-wooded ravine, in which lay hidden all that called itself the hamlet.

Violante having been warned by telegram from Naples of her intended visit, Ida confidently expected, so soon as the courtyard gates of the Palazzo opened to receive her, that there would be its girl-mistress awaiting her, and that then together they would exchange confidences and sympathy.

No such result ensued. She was ushered into a small, scantily furnished, and decidedly untidy room by a bare-legged peasant boy, and there Francesca left her to her own devices for nearly an hour, while she went to Violante's apartment.

The ill-kept exterior of the Palazzo did

not promise much in the way of comfort for its interior. Ida was nevertheless struck with astonishment at the poverty and disorder which on every side proclaimed itself. A third-rate albergo would have supplied better entertainment than was to fall to her lot during her sojourn in that ancient Palazzo.

Francesca, returning from her long colloquy with her young mistress, apologised somewhat for the condition of things; but then, she said, what would you have! The honoured Maestro of the house was dead, and its young mistress—ah, she was so ill, so ill! She had thought for nothing; she could not even see the English Signora—not that day, at least—but to-morrow, next day, perhaps. Would the Signora have patience and wait a day or so?

And then Francesca had again disappeared, and her place was taken by an untidy little maid, who spoke an odd patois utterly unintelligible to Ida, and seemed at a loss to understand Ida's Italian.

This was the case with the other servants of the house. They were but few in number, and they one and all presented the appearance of untidy, ill-educated peasants, assuredly not that of trained domestics. And they one and all spoke the odd mixture of Italian and Greek known as Calabrese.

To add to the discomfort of the whole thing, the fare was of the coarsest and most frugal, and the sleeping accommodation corresponded in quality. The rooms were small; the heat was intolerable; the buzzing of the insects and the noise of the cicale alone were sufficient to prevent sleep.

On the third day after her arrival Ida began to feel that the journey so impetuously undertaken was a mistake from first to last, and bethought her of writing home to her father and Juliet stating the facts of the case, and explaining her reasons for not writing sooner.

First, however, she thought she would finally ascertain if there were any likelihood of obtaining an interview with Violante.

To this end she despatched the untidy little waiting-maid in search of Francesca, who had seemed oddly enough to have purposely kept out of her way since the day of her arrival. But before the little maid could have had time to deliver her message, Francesca herself, agitated and weeping passionately, entered the room.

Violante was dying—could not live

more than a week, if that—said the doctor, who had been hastily summoned from Cosenza.

She wished to see the Englishman who had broken faith with her once more, give him back his ring with her own hand, and bid him an everlasting adieu. Would the Signora send him a letter that would bring him without a moment's delay?

Ida at once consented to do so. To summon her husband and her father to the bedside of the dying girl would be one step in the programme she had planned. So she wrote a hurried line to her husband, and immediately after a second and longer letter to her father explaining matters, and begging him to accompany Sefton to Alta Laura.

Francesca did not see any necessity for posting the letter to Lord Culvers, so it was torn in fragments and tossed into the kitchen fire.

The letter to Sefton, however, she carefully sealed with Violante's ring in order to render it the more impressive, and then transmitted through the post to Giorno, who, with Pippo, remained in Paris, keeping an eye on Captain Culvers.

CHAPTER XXI.

To the last hour of his life Clive will never forget that swift yet tedious journey to the south undertaken under such strange conditions. Had any one said to him only yesterday, "Out of the whole human race can you single out your enemy?" he would at once have replied affirmatively with the name of Sefton Culvera. Yet here was he to-day playing the part of a sworn friend to this man, the part, indeed, that could be expected of none but a sworn friend, starting, at a moment's notice, on a quest out of which all he could hope to receive by way of payment would be the pleasure of looking upon another man's happiness.

For, stifled the thought as he might, again and again would it present itself: "By-and-by you will have to stand by and see this husband and wife kiss each other on the lips, and join hands in reconciliation, and then nothing more will fall to your share but to drop out of their lives for ever."

During the long night hours of their journey, with his nerves strung to their tightest, and his brain active in conjuring up terrors and horrible possibilities, Clive tried to face this thought in its bare

hideousness, and, as it were, look it out of countenance. The effort was futile. Face it as much as he liked, he could never look away its ugliness. The mere endeavour to do so was something equivalent to running the point of a stiletto into his flesh, and crying out, "See here! The farther I send it in the less I shall feel it."

Perhaps, after all, what gave the sting to these bitter thoughts was the knowledge of Sefton Culvers's unworthiness. Clive's worst enemies had never accused him of priggishness, he had been known to stand up for more than one man who had, as the phrase goes, "gone under," and plead "extenuating circumstances" where most men would have said "serve him right." Those, however, had been cases which had not come so nearly home to him. He had seen the unworthiness of other men, he felt the unworthiness of Sefton Culvers—therein lay the whole of the difference.

It was not, then, surprising that with thoughts such as these he could throw but little warmth into his intercourse with the man to whom he had been thus suddenly called upon to act the comrade.

Sefton, on his part, showed no disposition to bridge the distance between them.

His demeanour throughout the journey was gloomy and abstracted, broken now and again by sudden fits of stormy, reckless defiance, in which he talked a good deal about being a first-rate shot; and threatened to teach those skulking, cowardly vagabonds a sharp lesson. These fits, however, grew rarer as the journey progressed, and his demeanour became less that of a man nerving himself to meet a crisis with energy and decision, than of one compelling himself to stoicism and despair.

Clive noting this change of manner set it down to the conviction—gaining strength in his own mind—that it was to Ida's dying bed they had been summoned, and that the ring to be resigned was a wedding-ring which she judged ought never to have been placed upon her finger.

A wild, irrepressible feeling that could be called exultation compared with other moods filled his mind at the thought. To see Ida on her death-bed resigning a ring she had never prized to its unworthy donor, would be to see her soul set free from bondage. That would be a sorrow that became a joy beside the thought of a peace patched up between this uncongenial husband and wife, and years of dreary companionship to be passed together.

"The fever is the greatest danger she runs, there can be no other," he blurted out once, impetuously, as he and Sefton paced the platform at Naples waiting for the train that was to bear them on the latter half of their journey. "She is an English-woman—the daughter of an English peer. She is staying in the house of an Italian nobleman. They would never dare to offer her insult or even annoyance."

Sefton's reply contradicted every one of his suppositions.

"To my mind," he said, gloomily, "fever is the very least of her dangers. Take the facts of the case and judge for yourself. Supposing that you had offended past forgiveness, not one person only, but a whole community, a set of lawless, insolent, ill-conditioned people, glad of any excuse to execute a vendetta—a vendetta, believe me, is far from being a thing of the past in Italy, in some places the authorities take no notice whatever of its perpetration. Tell me, would you like the person who had partly been the cause of this offence to be planted in the midst of such a set of ruffians without any protection whatever?"

There could be but one answer to such a question, and for a few minutes there fell a pause, which the two men made busy with gloomy thoughts.

"Then," said Clive, presently, "you imagine Ida's letter to you was written under compulsion? I imagined it to be——"

He broke off abruptly, remembering to whom he was talking.

The finish of his sentence would have been :

"The natural outburst of indignation that a high-spirited girl would feel at a sudden revelation of treachery."

"Perhaps written under compulsion, or perhaps under persuasion, for they are a wily people these south Italians," answered Sefton. "But, in any case, however written, it serves their purpose——"

He broke off abruptly; his face, on which a gas-lamp overhead threw a flickering light, showed white and rigid.

"What purpose?" asked Clive, for Sefton's voice had an odd, jarring note in it.

"Of a decoy," answered Sefton, shortly; and then he turned on his heel, and left Clive to ruminate over a new train of thought.

It was a train of thought which stirred the very depths of his nature, and made

him feel that the angels of darkness were coming about him in new shapes now. Great Heavens! The monsters with which the Greek heroes did battle in old time were comely compared with these.

He rallied his forces, and resolved to beat them down.

"I am a man," he cried, in spirit. "There is such a thing as duty! I will sweep my heart clean of all thoughts rather than entertain such monsters as these. If danger threaten Clive I will stand by him as if he were my dearest friend."

And it so chanced that at the very moment that Clive was making up his mind, in spite of all temptations and adverse circumstances, to listen to the voice of duty, Ida, by another road, was arriving at the conclusion that life was intended to be something other than a playground where people could pluck flowers and chase butterflies to their hearts' content.

Death had speeded more quickly on his way to Alta Lauria than had those travellers on theirs; and as the two men stood waiting for their train at Naples, Violante's wayward, love-sick soul had struggled forth from its worn and wasted tenement.

Her eyes had been fixed upon the door, waiting for it to open and admit the man who had played her so ill a turn, and her ears had strained for the sound of his footsteps to her very last breath.

Francesca's grief took a strange form. She was a passionate, impetuous woman, apt to speak her thoughts as they rose in her mind, and noisy alike in grief and in joy, yet when she stood beside the white, lifeless form, not a sound passed her lips, not a tear stood in her eye.

She went silently from the chamber of death to the room where Ida was preparing to go to rest for the night, and laying her hand on the girl's arm, said only :

"Come, see his work!"

Ida understood her, and silently followed the way she led.

It was the first time the girl had ever stood beside a bed of death, and a great awe filled her soul as she stood looking down on the beautiful, rigid face, and thin hands clasped as if in prayer. The priest had administered the last rites of the Church early in the day, and naught remained to be done but to dress the maiden for her last long sleep.

The great candles placed on either side

of the bed had not yet been lighted; nevertheless, the room was not dark. A glorious summer's moon, which filled in the window-panes with a landscape of sky and mountain of surpassing grandeur, poured a flood of silver light on Violante's girlish features, impressing upon them a supernatural and spiritual beauty that in life they had never known.

"How beautiful! How awful!" exclaimed Ida.

Then, moved by a sudden impulse, and heedless of Francesca's presence, she knelt down beside the dead girl, covering her face with her hands.

It was an act of homage—of submission alike to the great law and to the greater Law-Giver.

And as she knelt thus in that dread presence, with senses sealed to all outward things, a rush of thoughts came to her.

How vain seemed life with its passions and longings! This girl was but one of thousands who, as it were, beat out their souls with their hopes and dreads. Had not she herself been doing the same thing, though in another fashion? Were not her feet bent on running much the same course? Where would it land her at last? To gratify her pride—her dignity, as she had called it—had she not in a moment of passion tossed all her solemnly-undertaken obligations to the four winds of heaven?

Now when Death came to her side—as come he must—with his weights and scales, how light and poor a thing that pride and dignity would seem! Ah, how poor and contemptible everything in life would seem, except that which, begun in Time, finds its fruition in Eternity—duty!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE news of Violante's death met Clive and Sefton at Caréno, one of the nest of little villages they had to pass through on their way to the Sila Mountains.

From Naples they had travelled to Bufalora direct, there they had changed trains for Cosenza, and at Cosenza they had again changed for Caréno, a tiny place that had been half-wrecked by the earthquake of 1870.

They arrived here in the middle of the night, and found the one little inn astir to meet the arrival of passengers by that train. The landlord, an energetic little man, was profuse in his recommendation of his sleeping accommodation, which he

said had been expressly arranged to meet the requirements of English travellers.

Clive and Sefton had, however, taken all the sleep they intended to take as they had jolted in their train over the marshes and across the plains of tamarisk.

Supper they must have—yes, that was a necessity; and also provisions must be put together for their tramp through the Sila Mountains. Also mules and guides must be found for them; but beyond this they would not trouble the landlord of the albergo.

While the little man busied himself in carrying out their directions in these respects, the two men arranged their plans for the continuation of their journey.

Sefton, who had travelled the same road before, laid down the law on the matter.

"The sooner we start the better," he said, "if we wish to reach Alta Lauria before nightfall. It is at least twelve hours from here on the best of mules. We have over six thousand feet to mount; the mountain paths are atrocious; we can't do with less than two mules each."

"And we have to think of the return journey," said Clive. "If Ida should be well, and able to travel, the less delay in getting back the better."

He spoke moodily. The nearer it came, the harder seemed the necessity of seeing Sefton and Ida side by side as husband and wife once more.

Sefton did not for the moment reply. When his answer came, it was a gloomy one.

"Let the return journey alone," he said; "the getting there is all we can think of now. It will be impossible to arrange the details of our return till we know what awaits us there."

The landlord came in to announce that he had succeeded in procuring for them two of the best guides the district could supply—Ditta and Andrea Capelli. He had sent and roused them up from their sleep, and they would be ready to start so soon as the sun rose. But the mules! There were only two in the place that a gentleman could ride, and one of these had lamed himself only yesterday, and would be fit for nothing for more than a week. He would have to send all round in search of others. Now would the gentlemen be pleased to wait and rest while he did so?

And then, to deprecate the angry impatience which he could see in the

faces of his guests, the little man proceeded to retail a few scraps of gossip which he thought might be likely to interest them.

The gentlemen were going to Alta Lauria—to the Palazzo, not a doubt. Now had they heard the sad news which had been told him only yesterday night, that the Marchese's only daughter was dead? The Marchese himself had died only a year or so ago, and now his daughter was dead. Was it not sad? And the Palazzo and all the Marchese's land would go now to a distant relative who had been born and brought up in Naples, and knew nothing of Calabria and its people.

Violante dead! Sefton's face grew white. He rose a little unsteadily from the table and walked away to the window.

The landlord seemed to feel that he had somehow conveyed unwelcome news, and, after asking Clive if he would like to see the guides so soon as they arrived, he discreetly left the room.

Clive drew a long breath.

"This explains Ida's letter," he exclaimed. And at the moment he could not have said whether the thought brought him the most of joy or of pain.

Sefton made no reply. He was standing at the half-open casement, his head thrown back, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes, with a strange, unseeing look in them, fixed upon the distant landscape.

The inn stood on rocks a little above the small cluster of houses dignified by the title of village. Below these the valley lay in depths of purple, gloom; straight in front towered the ridges of La Sila, crag over crag, spire over spire, till they lost themselves in the clouds.

The moon had set, and above these fantastic crags and spires faintly showed the beautiful white light which precedes the dawn.

On this Sefton's unseeing eyes seemed fixed.

A remark which he presently made seemed to show that he was following a curious train of thought.

"I dare say, after all," he said, in a vague, dreamy tone, "a man never gets any one to love him better than his mother does. Now if anything were to happen to me, no one would grieve for me like my poor old mother!"

Assuredly Captain Culvers's late associates at No. 15, Rue Vervien, would have found some difficulty in identifying this absent, gloomy man, with

their *débonnaire* if somewhat haughty companion of two or three days back.

Clive was puzzled. What did this new mood taking possession of the man mean? The entrance of the guides—the brothers Capelli—at this moment prevented further talk.

They presented a somewhat ferocious appearance with their guns and tall, brigand hats. Their faces, however, were prepossessing, their manner respectful. The elder brother, Ditta, was a man of about forty years of age, Andrea some six or eight years younger.

Sefton interrogated them as to their knowledge of the mountain passes, and whether it would be possible to arrive at Alta Lauria before nightfall.

They shrugged their shoulders. If they set off at once it would be possible; but where there were mules to find! And then they shrugged their shoulders again.

Clive, standing near the open window, had his attention for a moment diverted from these men by a voice which reached his ear coming up out of the darkness in the courtyard below.

"Have those Englishmen gone on yet," it said, "or do they stay here for sunrise?"

The landlord's voice replied telling the story of the search for mules, and that most probably the travellers would be delayed for an hour or so.

Then followed an animated colloquy—sympathy on one side, complaint on the other—respecting the hard fate of innkeepers who had to keep their houses open all day and all night to meet the uncertain hours of the trains.

Clive, leaning slightly forward, saw a man emerge from the courtyard, and turn his steps towards the road that wound upward to the mountains. He could just make out in the semi-darkness that his figure was young and slight, and that he carried a gun.

Knowing the fondness for gossip which exists in Italian villages, he laid no stress upon the circumstance.

Later on, however, it was to be recalled to his memory.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE delay in procuring the mules retarded their journey by three or four hours, and in spite of their urgency, and the offer of double and treble pay alike to landlord and muleteers, Clive and Sefton did not

get away from the inn till close upon eight o'clock that morning.

By noon, however, thanks to the good pace of the animals when found, they succeeded in reaching the pasture tablelands of La Sila, which in the summer is the scene of a vast migration of shepherds and their flocks from the plains below.

The hour of Ave Maria found these plains with their meandering streams and shadowy beech forests some three thousand feet below them, and entirely hidden from their view by the intervening perpendicular rocks.

A white pebbly fumara, or dry torrent course, then became their road. It wound away steadily upward for some three or four miles; the rocks on either side of it closing in, near and nearer the higher they went, until at length little more than a broad ribbon of blue sky seemed left to them overhead.

Landscape there was none. Where the sharp perpendicular rocks on either side split, as it were, and the eye wandered there for a glimpse of surrounding scenery, or, as in the case of Olive and Sefton, in hopes of catching a distant view of Alta Lauria, it was met only by other sharp perpendicular rocks, or perhaps by some ravine choked with earthquake-riven blocks of granite; or some yawning chasm showing black now in the fading daylight.

And everywhere silence, solitude—intense, profound. It seemed a place for shades and ghosts to wander in, rather than men endowed with senses that loved light and colour, glow and variety in beauty.

"They're taking us all right, I suppose; this path seems endless," said Olive, addressing Sefton in English.

Sefton made no reply. He had descended from his mule, which he was leading over a rough part of the road. His head was bent, he seemed lost in thought.

So Olive addressed an equivalent question in Italian to Ditta.

"How much more of this? How many kilos?" he asked.

The man shrugged his shoulders, and answered that another two hours would bring them in sight of Alta Lauria.

After all, hours measured their road better than kilos. Their day's march, so far, could have been accomplished in less than half the time along an English country road.

It would have been useless to deny, young and muscular though they were, that

the fatigue of their day's mountaineering following on the heels of their rapid travelling from Paris was beginning to tell on them.

Olive noticed that during the last two hours of this seemingly endless pass, Sefton's brandy-flask went very often to his lips.

Their strip of blue sky overhead presently told them that the sun was setting, the deep, level blue catching all sorts of wondrous tints, changeful, oscillating, undefinable as the colours in a dove's wing.

Then these, too, in their turn vanished, leaving what had been level blue before level grey now, deepening in parts into the night blue of an Italian sky.

And then a slow, white radiance spreading athwart this, told them that the moon had risen.

Straight in front of them their path took a sudden sharp curve.

Sefton and Olive were walking side by side now, and the guides were following with the four mules.

"When we round that curve we get in sight of Alta Lauria," said Sefton.

He stood still for a moment, leaning his back against a huge block of granite which might have suggested the thought that the Titans, when building the mountains, had let fall one of their bricks.

"Better mount," said Olive; "you're getting footsore."

During this, the last day of their journey together, his heart had softened towards his companion in a way that, taking all things into consideration, seemed even to himself unaccountable.

Sefton, however, had no intention of mounting. He let the guides with their mules pass on ahead, then he lowered his voice almost to a whisper.

"Redway," he said, "I've been thinking over a good many things during the last half-hour, and I've come to the conclusion that it'll be of no use for either of us to show fight."

"Show fight! Where, when, how?" asked Olive, looking all round as if in search of some hidden foe, and feeling instinctively for his revolver.

"That'll be of no use to you," said Sefton, noting the movement; "if one of those skulking cowards attacks us there'll be at least half-a-dozen in hiding to back him up. Besides——" here he broke off with a short laugh, "we won't have unnecessary bloodshed. They'd rather not touch you

if it can be helped—it's me—my life they want—not yours."

"Why must there be any attacking?" said Clive. "We've got so far on our journey unmolested. Alta Lauria is almost in sight now. There's no sign of any one skulking about."

His eye scanned the rocks right and left of him as he ended his sentence.

"They wouldn't be such fools as to attack us here," replied Sefton; "there's no hiding-place out of which they could take sure aim. It would be a case of fair fight, man to man, face to face. No, wait till we've rounded that point there, straight ahead of us, and you'll see what I mean."

Clive suddenly paused, looking Sefton straight in the face.

"Do you suppose," he cried, with a fierce impetuosity for which the other was not prepared, "that I've travelled with you side by side all these miles, and then intend to stand by and see you butchered? Do you imagine I've brought my revolver for nothing?"

Sefton grew excited also.

"That's it," he cried. "I knew that was in your mind. It would be madness—sheer madness for you to attempt that sort of thing. Supposing you put a bullet into a man, what then? There'd be a dozen knives out at you at once. And then what becomes of Ida?"

That was a question not easy to answer. Clive remained silent.

Sefton went on:

"What are those fellows in front good for? Would they go on to the Palazzo and be a safe conduct for Ida back to England? No. They'd just run away as fast as their legs would carry them, or else fraternise with the scoundrels who had knocked us over. No, you must do as I tell you. Promise me."

There fell a long silence. The crack of the whips of the muleteers, their loud-voiced "Hols, huepe!" to the animals, together with a jangling of bells, broke the intense stillness; but there came never a word from Clive.

Sefton went on impetuously as before.

"I want your word of honour—nothing else will satisfy me—that if I am attacked you won't show fight, but will push straight on with the guides to the Palazzo, demand to see Ida, and then not trust her out of your sight till you get clear of this accursed hole. Will you do this?—give me your word of honour that you will."

"Upon my life, Culvers, I can't," Clive

exclaimed, vehemently, "or if I did, it would be of no use. I'm confident if I saw a rifle pointed at you, or a knife raised, I should forget all about my word of honour, and out with my revolver at once."

The two men had again come to a standstill in the narrow pass, and were now facing each other. On their right hand the rocks rose straight and sheer, with never a break in them; on their left a huge rift let in a gleam of the fast-fading twilight, showed a vista of fantastic yet still perpendicular rocks beyond, showed, too, the deep black chasm that their path was skirting.

"What is your revolver like?" asked Sefton. "Six-chambered, I suppose?"

Clive, thinking that he was weighing the chances of its being of use to them, drew it from his pocket and handed it to him.

"It's simply perfect. I know of no better make," he said.

Sefton looked at it critically, then he made a step towards the rift in the rocks which let in the twilight, as if to get a better view of the toy-like weapon.

And then, before Clive could realise what was in his mind, he had leaped over the blocks and boulders which separated their path from the precipice it skirted, and the revolver was flung into the darkness of the chasm.

Clive turned upon him furiously.

"You'd no right to do such a thing," he cried; "it was treacherous of you. At least you should have given me a choice in the matter."

Sefton, for once in his life, met anger with calmness.

"I tell you you have no choice in the matter—the choice remains with me, and I have made it. Try and face the fact that we are in a position in which weapons are of no use to us. If we are not attacked, well and good, we don't require our revolvers; if we are, all your revolver would do would be to sign your own death-warrant, it wouldn't save my life. When we round that point, as I told you before, you'll see what I mean. Don't you see, man, what deadly earnest I am in?"

And "deadly earnest" was written on his white face, set teeth, and rigid, knotted brow as plainly as it could well be.

Then, in a silence that neither of the two men were in the mood to break, they made the rest of the distance that lay

between them and the sharp curve of the rocks.

When they rounded that curve Clive saw in a moment what Sefton had meant.

The narrow mountain pass came to an end there, and the path wound steadily downwards into a dark, well-wooded ravine, in which lay hidden all that called itself the village of Alta Lauria. High over this ravine, on the farther side, straight in front of them, stood the Palazzo, crushed and squeezed, as it were, into a nest of whitely-gleaming rocks.

Higher still, over the Palazzo itself, hung a great, white, staring moon, cutting into sharp relief against the lucent night sky every fantastic crag and turret of the uppermost heights, and piling its shadows upon the dark, wooded ravine, till it showed like the Valley of the Shadow of Death itself.

And the path at the head of which Sefton and Clive now stood led straight into it.

A bare, pebbly path it ran for about twenty yards or so, then it sloped gradually downwards into what seemed a wood of ilex and wild olive, and where the only road appeared to be that which wayfarers themselves had trampled down into the semblance of one.

Ditta brought his mules to a standstill, to ask if the gentlemen would like to mount, or would they rather walk through the wood, and mount at the farther end.

"How far does this wood go—how many kilos?" questioned Clive, trying to gauge the danger that might threaten now.

The man replied that it was something over two kilos; that it was easier to walk it, as there was so much scrubby under-wood, in which the mules were apt to get entangled. On the other side the road grew rocky and steep once more, and then it might be as well to mount.

"We'll walk," said Sefton, with great decision. "Mules would be no good to us in that tangle."

The muleteers went on ahead once more, with their cracking whips, and "holas," and "huepes," urging on their tired animals, till together they disappeared amid the shadows of the ilexes and wild olives.

Was it fancy, Clive asked himself, or did there come, together with the shouts and cracking of whips, a sound of movement, of trampling from out the shadowy depths of the wood, that seemed something other than the tramp of the mules and the muleteers?

Sefton heard it, not a doubt. With a sudden, impetuous bound he dashed ahead of Clive some half-dozen yards, then came to a standstill.

The moon lighted up his set, white face as he turned it towards the edge of the wood whence the sound had seemed to come.

"Here, you fellows in hiding there!" he cried in Italian, in a loud, ringing voice; "I'm a soldier, and an Englishman! If you want my life put a bullet into me! Don't rush out at me with your confounded butchers' knives as if I were a sheep!"

Swift and sharp there came the answer he expected; the click of a rifle, the whizzing of a bullet, and Sefton Culvers fell a dead man at Clive's very feet.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"COME into the garden, Ida, just for ten minutes, before it gets dark," said Juliet, leading the way, as she spoke, through the open French window into the shadowy garden. "Oh, father and Peggy will entertain each other right enough; one will go to sleep in one corner, and one in the other, I dare say. I've ever so much to say to you. I hardly know where to begin."

It was Ida's first day at home after a lengthened absence. Two years had passed since the tragedy in the Calabrian mountains, which had made her a widow, and had avenged Violante's broken heart.

And the whole of those two years, with but brief interludes, Ida had passed in Devon with Sefton's aged mother, ministering to her as a daughter might, and doing her utmost to render her closing days days of peace, if not of happiness. Not until the aged sufferer had passed away to her rest did Ida consider her obligations to her at an end, and return to her home.

In all respects, during those two years, Ida had carried herself as a widow might—a widow, too, whose conscience was not altogether clear of remorse.

For, reason with herself as she might, she could not divest her mind of the idea that she herself had been instrumental in bringing about her husband's death.

The terrible night when Francesca sternly summoned her to the gates of the Palazzo "to receive her husband," and she stood there to see his lifeless body brought in by the two muleteers, seemed printed on

her memory in colours that could never fade.

Her remorse had preyed upon her heavily, and had sent her down into Devon to lead a life from which she rigorously excluded all the fun and frolic in which hitherto she and Juliet had gone shares.

And not once during the whole of those two years had she and Clive met or exchanged a letter.

At Naples, by her wish, they had parted with scarce a word of leave-taking. She had gone with her husband's body straight to his home in Devon; and he had remained in Italy, doing his utmost to facilitate the discovery of the murderer by the offer of large rewards alike to the police and to the peasantry of the district.

It was all in vain, however. The bullet could be traced to no one of the party of men who had gone forth with their guns in the gloom of that summer night.

Off and on Juliet had spoken her mind very freely to Ida about what she called her "conventual life."

"Come home for a time," she had written to her, "and let us just for a week or two make believe to be young and light-hearted girls once more."

And again and again in blunt, sisterly fashion she had attacked Ida's resolution to hold no communication whatever with Clive.

"Even supposing," she had written, "that you have ruined one man's life—a fact I by no means admit—I don't see that that is a reason why you should ruin another man's. Use your common sense, my dear— There'll have to be some plain speaking between you and me sooner or later."

Juliet's remonstrances, however, had been all in vain. Ida had held to her purpose, and it was not until death had released her from her obligations to Sefton's desolate mother, that Juliet found her opportunity for "plain speaking."

She had seized it so soon as Ida had entered the house.

"You'll please to sit down in white to dinner to-night, not in that ugly black dress," she had said, minutely criticising her sister's toilette.

And when Ida had yielded compliance, and had gone back to her room to don the white gown, she had found waiting for her a half-wreath of wine-red roses, which Juliet herself had twined, and which she

insisted that her sister should wear as a throatlet.

So soon as dinner had come to an end, she had, as she phrased it—when telling the story to Goody afterwards—"hunted" Ida out of the drawing-room into the shadowy garden, as the more appropriate place in which to begin her plain speaking.

In most characteristic fashion it was begun.

For a few minutes the two had wandered in silence down a by-walk, where beds of heavily-scented carnations were "giving back to the earth in fragrance all that they had taken out of it in nourishment"; and where tall marguerites were shining like so many stars from out their mist-like foliage. Then Juliet suddenly announced, with a heavy sigh, that she felt herself to be "a blot upon the face of creation."

Ida started.

"A blot!" she exclaimed.

"Yea. I feel—to speak poetically—as if I were a flower without its scent; or a star without its light. Or—to speak prosaically—as if I were a cow without its horns; a gnat without its sting; a table without its legs; a dish with nothing upon it!"

"All that!" cried Ida. "What a conglomeration of experiences!"

"I haven't half done yet. Or a pen without nibs; a pencil without lead; a pin without a head; a needle without an eye; a——"

"Oh, sum it up in a word, and be done with it, Juliet!"

"Well, then, in a word, 'my occupation's gone!' During the two years you have been away, and things have been so slow, I have improved the occasion to the best of my abilities. I have tamed Peggy utterly, and have reduced father to a state of abject submission; and now the *raison d'être* of my own existence has come to an end."

"I should get another *raison d'être*, and go on living, if I were you. What about Arthur Glynde?" said Ida, archly. "Is he as utterly tamed and subjugated as father and Peggy?"

Juliet stooped and gathered a long fern-frond, which she waved in front of Ida and herself to keep off the dancing twilight gnats.

"It doesn't in the least matter to me what Arthur Glynde is or is not," she answered, sentimentally. "When we next meet we shall require an introduction to each other."

"Juliet!"

"I mean it. We shall have passed entirely out of each other's recollection. I've told him that I never wish to see him again until——"

"Oh, Juliet," interrupted Ida, in great agitation, "don't say that! You can't mean it. Pray, pray, my darling, don't trifle with your happiness—with his!"

She spoke vehemently. The days when she herself might have talked in the same wilful fashion had long since gone by. She had learnt at what a cost wilfulness might be gratified, and she trembled lest Juliet might buy her experience in a similar manner.

"You won't let me finish what I was going to say," said Juliet, pathetically. "I told him I didn't wish to see him again until the day I fixed my wedding-day."

Ida drew a long breath of relief.

"That will be soon, dear, won't it? Aunt Sefton's death need not prevent a quiet, a very quiet wedding."

Juliet shook her head.

"When Arthur and I meet again he will be thinking of going into a churchyard, not into a church to be married. He'll be bald, with a high, shiny head, and grey whiskers, and he'll think a great deal more of his cook than he does of his tailor. And I shall be stout, and wear glasses, and a cap, and a great grey chignon. And I shall be 'given up to works of charity'—going out 'slumming' in the East End of London; be perpetually writing to the newspapers for money to give the babies in Bethnal Green a day of fresh air; or else——"

"Oh, have mercy, Juliet! Why and wherefore is all this to come about?"

"The why and wherefore can be put into a nutshell," answered Juliet, with great solemnity of manner. "I told Arthur—and he knows I mean it—that I would never—never fix my wedding-day till you fixed yours. Now do you understand why Arthur and I will need an introduction to each other when next we meet?"

"Oh, Juliet, you pain me!" cried Ida. And then, for a few minutes, there fell a silence between the sisters.

As they walked thus side by side in the gloaming, it was easy to note the difference that two years of a diverse experience had wrought in each. Juliet had blossomed into the very perfection of her delicate, dainty beauty, her colouring of eye, lip,

cheek, was at its freshest and best, and it would have been difficult to have found a more perfect model for an embodiment of the goddess of perpetual youth and beauty.

Not so Ida. In the two years that had passed she had lived ten, and her face showed it. Her beauty of feature remained, but it was a beauty of outline, not of colour and ever-varying tint. No one would take her for Juliet's twin-sister now, no one would ask her to stand as a model for the goddess of perpetual youth, although she might well have posed as a classic embodiment of stately dignity.

As they had talked they had wandered to the edge of the garden, and were now brought to a standstill by the little iron gate which separated it from the park.

It was a glorious evening. July was at its greenest and best. The sun had gone, the after-glow was dying, in a wonderful succession of opaline tints, into a pale green sky that threw into bold and sombre relief the grand old oaks and elms of the park. The air was alive with insect life. Birds were fluting to each other daintily and dreamily from out their leafy hiding-places, and ever and anon the rustle of the bracken below told that the rabbits were astir for their evening gambols.

It was the time, the place for confidences. Juliet felt it, and was the first to break the silence.

"I wish," she said, speaking very slowly as if she were thinking out her thoughts as she spoke them, "that you would tell me what it is poor Clive has done that you should keep him at arm's length as you do? Why won't you see him?"

Ida's pale face grew a shade paler.

"You pain me in asking these questions," she said, in a low tone; "don't you know I have begged you again and again never to allude to the past?"

"Yes; but here's the difficulty! I can't allude to my future without alluding to your past. I've told you over and over again, and I thoroughly mean it, that to the very end of my life I intend to be your shadow. If you die an old maid, I shall die an old maid. If you marry, I will marry—same day, same church, everything precisely the same, except the bridegroom."

Ida's eyes swam with tears.

"My darling," she said, brokenly, "your future will, I hope, be a far brighter one than mine. You haven't that on your conscience that I have on mine."

"Ah, well, there's one thing, at any rate, I wouldn't have on my conscience if I were you, and that is the responsibility of ruining Clive Redway's health and happiness. He looked frightfully ill when I saw him last week."

"Ill!"

"Oh, yes; half-way into a decline. He said he was going away, and I suppose it is to Madeira where all the consumptive people go. And I dare say he'll never get there, but will die on the voyage, and be buried in the sea."

A great tear fell on Juliet's hand as it rested on the rail of the iron gate. Juliet felt that her words were telling, and went on even more energetically.

"And he has a mother, you know, and she's not so young as she was, and I dare say it'll kill her as well. And she's such a darling—has such a lovely smile, and such beautiful white hair——"

"Oh stop, stop, Juliet, I can't stand it!"

"Oh, well, if you can't bear to talk about it, how will they bear to do it—die, I mean?" said Juliet, with a little confusion of meaning. "And what poor Mr. Redway will do, with his wife and son both dead, I can't imagine. Why, his life won't be worth having, and I dare say he'll do something foolish—marry again, or go to the Arctic regions and shoot Esquimaux—reindeer, I mean——"

"Juliet," interrupted Ida, "tell me honestly, is Clive ill, or looking ill? Don't torture me in this way."

Juliet gave a little laugh.

"You can judge for yourself, if you like," she said, calmly. "Do you see that dark figure coming towards us from under the beeches? That is Clive Redway."

"Juliet! this is your doing," cried Ida, indignantly.

"Why, of course," answered Juliet, unabashed. "I should be very angry if it were any one else's. Since I have put father and Peggy into their right places, I do all the inviting that has to be done. Young men and maidens, old men and children—none of them dare come near the house unless I invite them."

And before Ida had time to recover from her surprise, Juliet had disappeared, and there was Clive leaning over the gate, looking down into her eyes, and saying:

"I have come for the last time to learn my fate. Will you give me five minutes

—just five minutes—I don't ask for more!"

"Lovers' hours are long, though seeming short." Lady Culvers, with a start, awakened from her after-dinner nap, and looked up at the clock on a corner bracket. Its hands pointed to half-past two! That could not possibly be the hour. She rubbed her eyes, doubting their evidence.

"No, that's not the right time," said Juliet, coming out of a shadowy corner of the room. "Time was going so slowly I thought I'd jog it on a little, and so put the hands forward an hour or so."

"My dear love! Then what is the time? And where is Ida?"

"Well, judging from my own feelings, I should think it was going on for sunrise. I seem to have been sitting here for half a day, at least, doing nothing."

"And on the tip-toe of expectation," she added to herself, sotto voce.

"But where—where is Ida?" repeated Lady Culvers.

And Lord Culvers, entering the room at that moment, echoed her question.

"Ida at the present moment," answered the ever-ready Juliet, "is engaged with a professor of dancing—to whom I telegraphed this morning—making arrangements for a course of lessons in the Scotch reel, which is generally danced at Irish funerals. I left them in the garden together. Possibly, when they've arranged terms, they'll come in hand in hand."

She walked to the window as she finished speaking, and shadowing her eyes with her hand to shut out the lamp-light, looked a-down the dim walk.

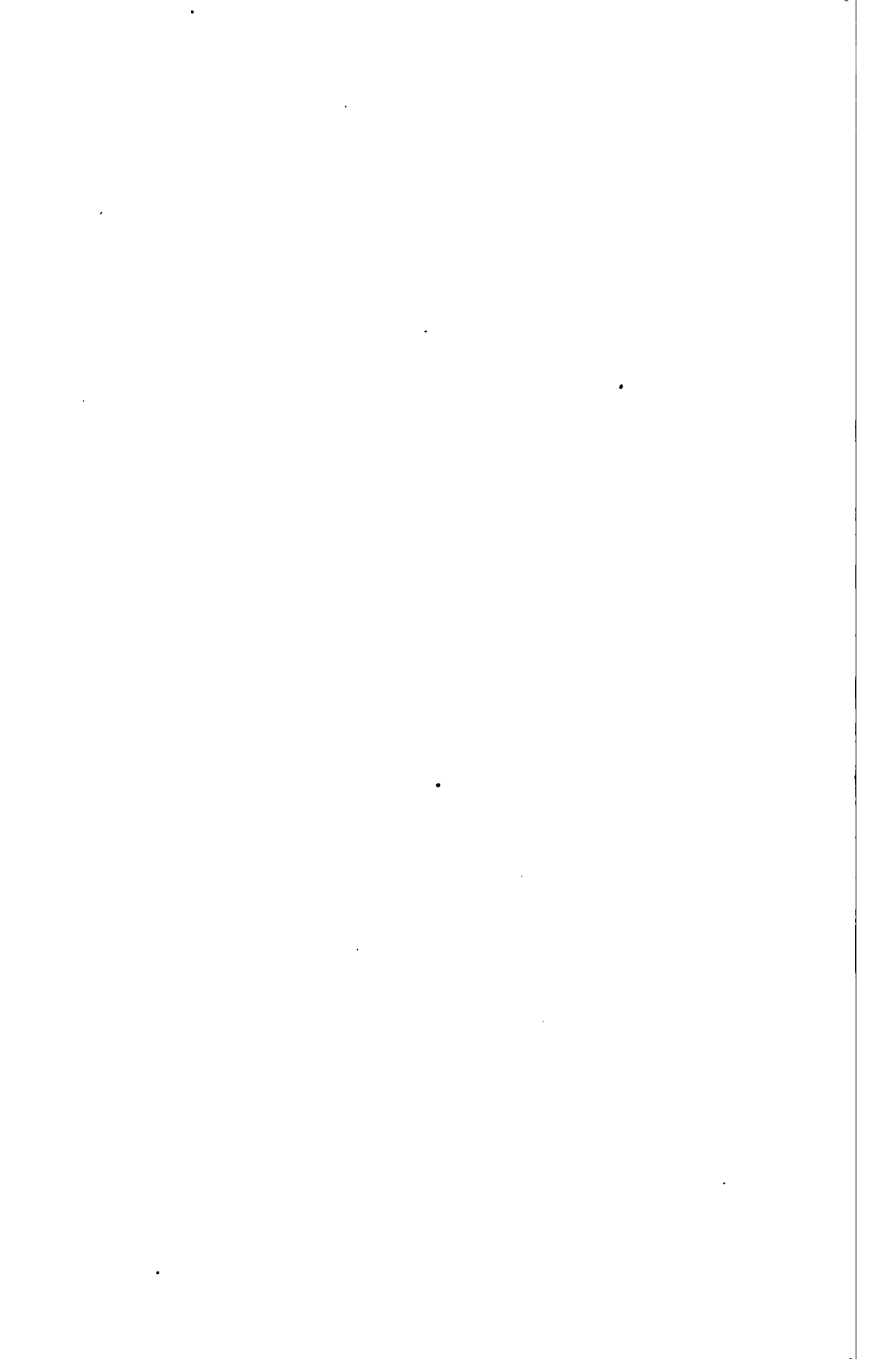
Bird-notes had ceased now; the mother-o'-pearl sky had given place to the sapphire-blue of night. A moon in crescent had risen high above the trees in the park, and "dimly rained about each leaf twilight of airy silver." Two figures were emerging from a side-walk, and making for the patch of light which the drawing-room window threw upon the terrace.

Juliet, with a bound, went to meet them.

"Where is Lord Culvers?" asked Clive, with a ring in his voice that had not been there for many a day past.

"Juliet," whispered Ida, tremulously, "since you will be my shadow, send for Arthur Glynde, and fix your wedding-day at once!"





MAY 27 1892 APR 20 1894

APR 15 1892

MAY 18 1892

MAY 27 1893

FEB 16 1894

NOV 23 1894

MAY 1 1895

MAY 2 1895

MAY 7 1895

JAN 15 1898

